



ARSON

CRITIQUE DE L'URBANISME:

Arson Zine

Communiqué #2: summer 2005/6

Invitation to an Insurrection

Sometimes it seems like the horrors are hardly even suprising anymore,
let alone horrifying.

It's like we're all either beaten unconscious or blissfully unaware:

Either you've taken in so much brutal truth you can't take in anymore,
or you were never really paying attention to begin with.

Either you've lived through so much hell you can't imagine life without it,
or you've been asleep this whole time.

Genocide.

Ecocide.

Poisoning the Water, Air, Soil.

Climate Change.

Rape.

War.

Logging.

Cops.

Slavery.

Wage Slavery.

Famine.

Genetic Engineering.

Nuclear Radiation.

Vivisection.

Politicians.

Politics.

Cancer.

Electromagnetic Radiation.

Television.

Nanotechnology.

Fossil Fuel Depletion.

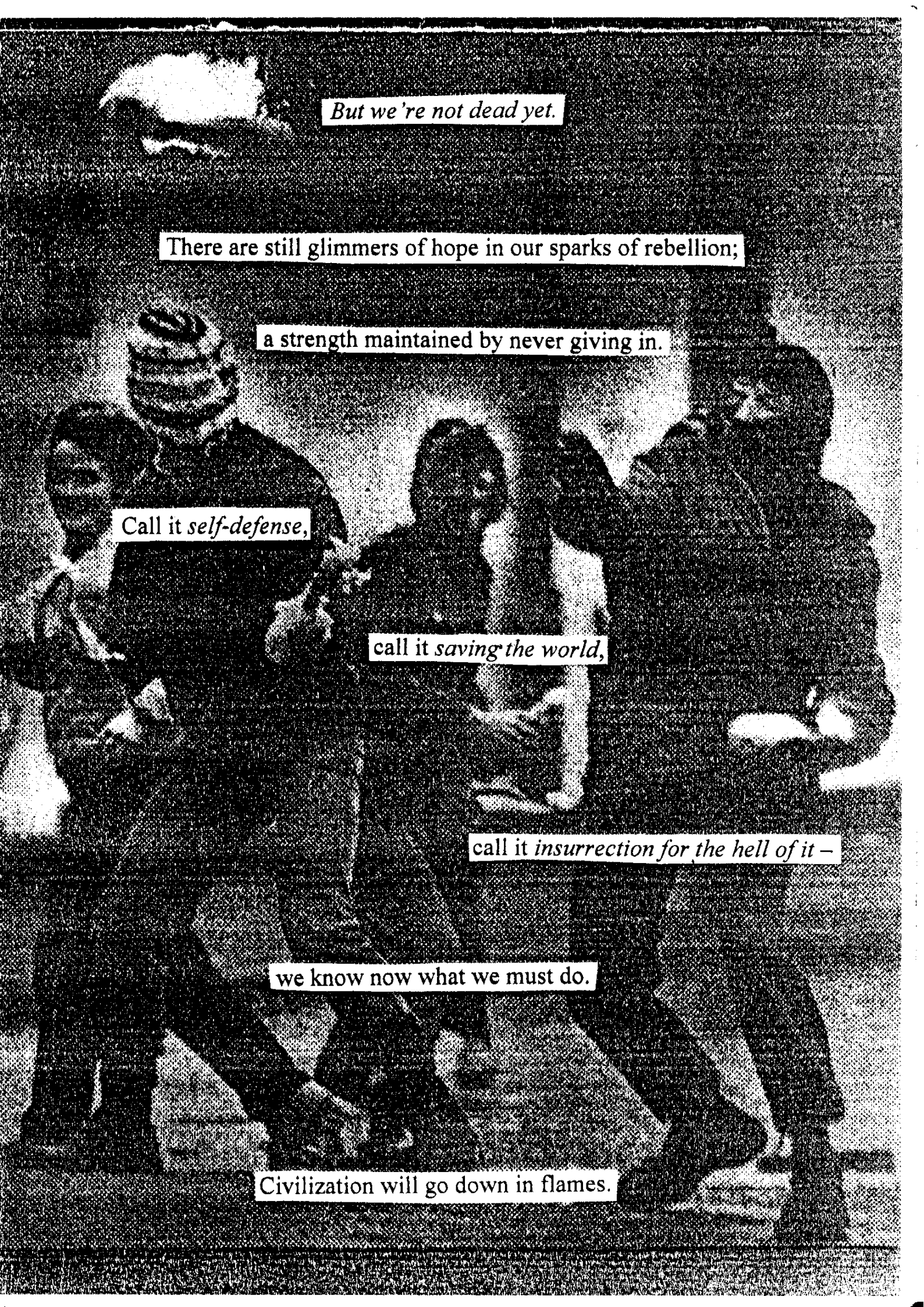
Advertising Executives.

The Military Industrial Complex.

The Prison Industrial Complex.

The Industrial Complex...

There used to just be four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

A grainy, black and white photograph of a group of people, possibly protesters, with text overlays. The image is high-contrast and has a halftone texture. The text is arranged in a vertical sequence, with each line in a white box. The background shows several people, some with their faces obscured or in shadow, and some holding what might be signs or flags.

But we're not dead yet.

There are still glimmers of hope in our sparks of rebellion;

a strength maintained by never giving in.

Call it *self-defense*,

call it *saving the world*,

call it *insurrection for the hell of it* –

we know now what we must do.

Civilization will go down in flames.

WE ARE NOT SEPARATE

An Introduction to Arson #2

*We are not separate beings, you and I.
We are different strands of the same Being.*

*You are me and I am you
and we are they and they are us.*

*This is how we're meant to be,
each of us one,
each of us all...*

– Leonard Peltier

It could be said that this issue of *Arson* has something of a theme. It was not originally intended to be so, but, for several reasons, this is how it evolved. Next issue will most likely be a return to the chaos of the first issue, with all kinds of material on all kinds of subjects, but let's worry about that when it happens. Right now I'm thinking some kind of introduction to this issue is in order.

With the exception of the occasional campaign to protect a specific place from a specific threat (Lake Cowal in New South Wales, for instance), it seems to me there is precious little unity between indigenous and anarchist struggles all over the globe. That this should be as true, or even more true, here in Australia, where the indigenous population have been subject to absolutely indisputable genocide, and where the invasion and colonization of their land has taken place without a *shred* of legality, *without one square inch of land ceded by treaty* by the indigenous population, is (or should be) shocking. When you take a step back and think about the vast injustice that this very nation as we know it is founded upon, and compare this in size and scope to the struggle *against* this very injustice, it beggars belief. What are we *doing*?

I think the enormity of the problem is part of what causes white/non-indigenous anarchists and radicals to keep their distance. We have no idea where to start, and we all too often fall into the trap of a politics of (racial) guilt – feeling bad because we have the same colour skin as the people who perpetrated the genocide and continue to forcibly deny indigenous sovereignty – which hardly inspires and empowers us to act, and so we end up doing nothing. (I don't at all want to belittle the efforts of those who do get active in campaigns like, for

instance, the Lake Cowal Campaign – I’m saying these folks should have a whole bunch more people jumping on board, so we can broaden and intensify the struggle *beyond* just protecting little parcels of land when they’re threatened by some nasty corporation).

Some white/non-indigenous radicals might argue that we have no responsibility to lend ourselves to indigenous resistance, or indeed, that we have no common cause in the first place, that our lives and communities and histories are so fundamentally different that it’s perfectly natural for our struggles to remain separate. I’m concerned that this flawed thinking might be informing our choices more than we care to admit, so I want to take a little time to give my take on this.

We Are All Indigenous. We all, every one of us, have roots in ancient communities whose ways of life were (and perhaps still are) infinitely more harmonious and healthy than the industrial death sentence we live with now. While few of us live on the land our ancestors originally did – the bloody era of conquest and colonialism has spread us, Europeans especially, far and wide – we are still connected to it; we are still indigenous to it. We are all of the earth, somewhere.

This is why a fetishization of indigenous culture – frequently springing, in my opinion, from a desire to imbue our struggles with more *authenticity* – makes sense only in the context of *missing what we have long ago lost*: belonging.

We Are All Colonized. We have all been submerged since birth in a monoculture of occupation, and now we, ourselves, are occupied territory. Long ago our ancestors had to be killed, starved or pushed off their land (wherever that might have been), overrun and taken prisoner with lies of a better life before they’d submit to the mega-machine. Now that we’re all behind enemy lines, the colonizers can just send us to school to learn who’s boss.

This is why the common liberal/left pitfall of a politics of (racial) guilt makes no sense to me – it implies identification with the colonizing culture, an identification we need to *break*, not reinforce. While it is true that white/non-indigenous people living on colonized indigenous soil are by default the benefactors of genocide, it is not true that they need remain so. It is not true that they are merely the children of a genocidal culture, unable to do anything but wring their hands and feel bad about the blood-soaked gifts their parents gave them.

These are ideas that can be interpreted a million different ways, that can mean a million different things to a million different people. I don’t have the time or space or inclination to try and cover every base here, and in any case I only know what these ideas mean to me:

We Are Not Separate.

Some time ago, I found out that I have Maori heritage. It came as quite a shock, for various reasons (not least my previously unquestioned ‘whiteness’), and I’m still not sure how I feel about it. Because there is very little I can do about it – the circumstances are such that it’s impossible for me to recover the precise details of my heritage. But the cultural identity crisis I’ve had as I’ve tried to come to terms with this lost and found and lost again part of my ancestry has taught me some things, I think. It’s certainly taught me something about the nature of the position white (and for this discussion this might also include non-white non-indigenous [to Australia] folks as well) radicals feel ourselves to be in when we consider involvement in the Aboriginal resistance movement: *we’re terrified of becoming colonizers ourselves*. Of course we are, and rightly so. All over the world, white radicals (including anarchists) have a long and sordid history of taking over, fucking over and flaking out on non-white struggle of all kinds. Just as often white radicals (still including anarchists) have feigned support for a far more militant non-white struggle, and then left them to be crushed by the full force of the state once some actual *effort* was required – you could ask the Black Panthers about this, but evidently they’re now mostly all dead or in solitary confinement.

This dichotomy of white and non-white struggle troubled me deeply for a long time, ripped me apart even. I felt like a power-hungry racist undercover agent for the white colonial empire every time I gave serious thought to even just researching my Maori heritage. And then one night I stumbled across those words, echoing out from the belly of the beast, from the cell of an American Indian warrior kidnapped and held captive by the U.S government, a bona-fide prisoner of war in this war to end all wars: “*We are not separate...*”.

What if we were to take this note from the front to heart? Not as a license to co-opt and colonize, or even as a new ‘strategy’ in our own idea of the war that need be waged, but as simple truth? What if the indigenous of the land we live on are simply our older siblings, ready to guide us with their knowledge and strength if only we would stop running around in circles and *listen*? What if the impossible quandaries of race and history and power and privilege disappeared as soon as we learned to love our older sisters and brothers, and act accordingly?

I want to be clear that I’m not talking about abandoning our responsibilities and realities as (somewhat) white anarchists, and wandering into indigenous communities with our hands in the air proclaiming “Show us the way! We are but lost sheep!” While it would be a huge understatement to say that we have a lot to learn, we are also not entirely clueless – it is entirely possible that indigenous people in struggle will want to exchange ideas with us. Certainly it is doubtful they will want an army of mindless zombies or disciples waiting to be shown the way. We have to have the maturity and intelligence (by this I am not referring to sharpening our ‘critique’ with even more convoluted academic theorizing) to find our way to effective struggle and sustainable lives *starting from here*. Look at what you have – your heritage, your knowledge, your

passion, your strength, everything that makes you the flawed, damaged, brave and uniquely beautiful person that you are. Then start your process of inner and outer decolonization in earnest: keep what you need and burn the rest. That's what you have. And that is enough.

There's no room for romanticism, fetishism, or objectification here – because we all have a common goal. Decolonization. Freedom.

It's time for anarchists to leave behind the fear and segregation of colonized politics, to learn that we ourselves are not doomed to perpetuate colonization – we are simply *displaced*, to earn the trust and love of the indigenous communities that will accept us (those that will not can hardly be blamed) and remember our common legacy of stolen life, to leave this culture of death for good in order to gather in its shadows and at its frayed edges, and finally, to wage one last assault against Babylon and bring it down forever, together.

Un-separated. Unconquered. Unbowed.

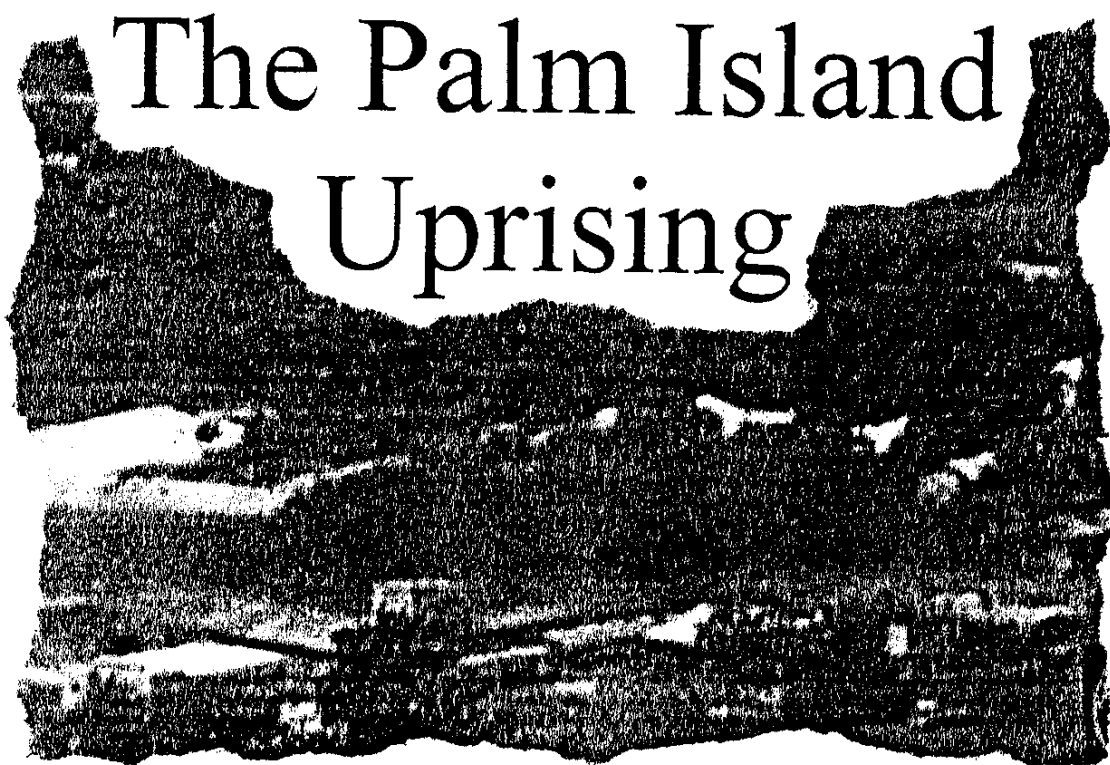
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So there's some material about indigenous resistance to the industrial death-culture of occupation in this issue. There's also, among other things, some material about strategic and tactical resistance – i.e. how we might go about getting done the shit that needs to be done. So...

Disclaimer for ASIO. This zine is FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY. Nobody who had any hand in its creation wants to overthrow the Australian Government of Occupation or destroy industrial civilization. We are not in any way “inciting violence against the community”, or against “Australia's forces overseas”. We do not “support Australia's enemies”, and do not encourage others to do so. No Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people have condoned, contributed to, or authored any of the material in this zine, with the exception of Kevin Gilbert (who tragically passed away in 1993, and is thus hopefully now immune from prosecution). It was put together by a bunch of true-blue aussie-battler white kids, and you can come lock us up with your new ‘terror laws’ if you can find us!!

Warning to Readers. We strongly advise against doing anything you might get busted for with this zine on your person (and please also remember that with the insane new laws cops can detain, question and search anyone they say they suspect “might have just committed, might be committing, or might be about to commit a terrorism offense” – reports that this may include wearing a black hoodie remain unsubstantiated). Trust us, this zine will not go down well with your friendly neighbourhood pig. You may even want to consider removing the really sketchy material and storing it somewhere secure. Don't get caught committing thought-crime, or any other crime. Stay safe. Get free.

The Palm Island Uprising



"We've had enough mate, this is ridiculous...The system not only is not working for us, it has never ever worked for us or delivered justice. What is going on on Palm Island is a genuine reflection of how all Aboriginal people are feeling at this stage across Aboriginal Australia."

– Murrandoo Doomadgee, cousin of Mulrunjie Doomadgee, on *Lateline*, 26th November 2004

On the 26th of November, 2004, around 300 members of the Aboriginal community on Palm Island in northern Queensland rioted, burning down the police station and courthouse, and setting fire to the police barracks, a police officer's house, and a stolen police car, by throwing Molotov cocktails (as well as rocks and other projectiles). The island's armed police force were helpless to stop the destruction, and the scores of riot police ready to be flown in from the mainland to put the riot down were prevented from doing so by rioters blockading the island's only airstrip with cars.

On the 19th of November, 36-year-old Palm Islander Mulrunjie (Cameron) Doomadgee had died in police custody, after being arrested for 'drunk and disorderly behavior'. The riot came in immediate response to the reading of the coroner's autopsy report a week later, which detailed Doomadgee's injuries at time of death as being four broken ribs, a punctured lung, and his liver literally torn in two – an injury most commonly seen in serious road accidents. The coroner deemed these injuries to be in-keeping with the official police line of Doomadgee having "fallen on a concrete step" during a "scuffle" as he was being led from the police paddy wagon to the island's watch-house. It seems the Aboriginal community of Palm Island did not agree.

Palm Island has quite a history of colonial brutality and indigenous resistance. Before white invasion in north Queensland, the island belonged to the Manbarra people. It was only in 1914 that the Queensland Government claimed the island as a "reserve", and shortly decided it would make an appropriate dumping ground for Aboriginal and Islander people regarded by the colonial establishment as "uncontrollables". By 1940, at least 1,630 people from 40 different Aboriginal communities around Queensland would be forcibly removed from their communities and deposited – imprisoned – on the island.

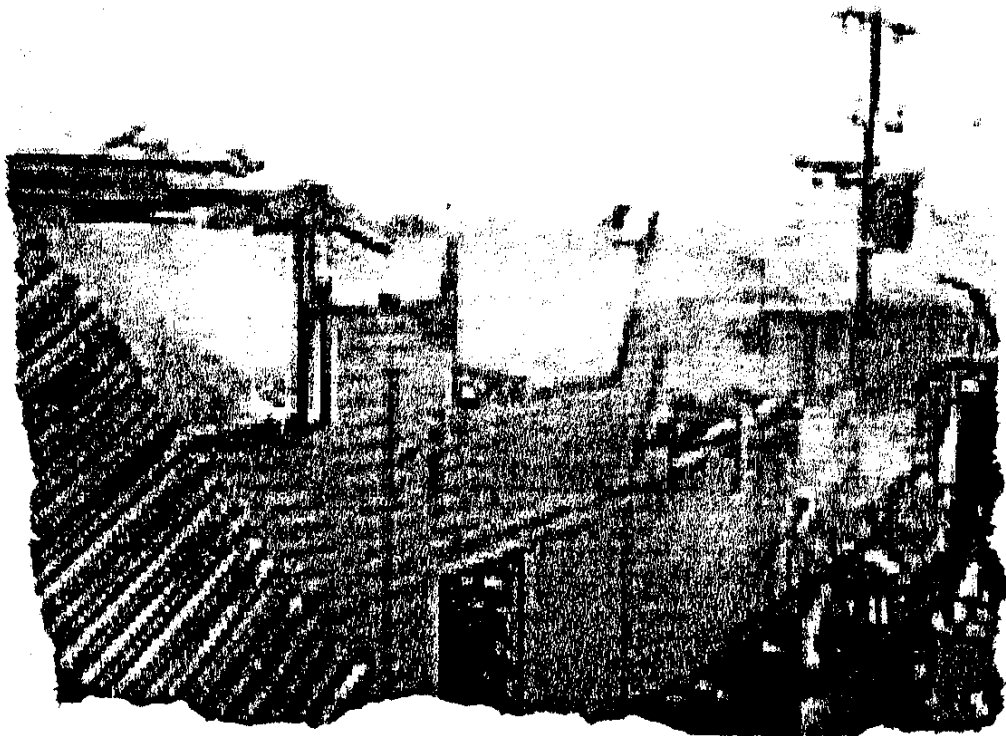
Removal to Palm Island was the heaviest punishment a colonial officer could legally administer. In charge of the new "reserve settlement" was an ex-army captain, Robert Curry, a man with no previous administrative experience. From the start the settlement was under-financed, with the residents (that is, prisoners) of the island – violently denied their traditional ways of life (even speaking Aboriginal languages was forbidden) – surviving on meagre rations and living in complete poverty. Leprosy and venereal disease spread through the settlement, and the doctors appointed to the island by the colonial administration were, unsurprisingly, less than enthusiastic in their attempts to curtail the diseases spreading.

Perhaps an indication of just how desperate things were on the island during this time is the mental collapse of Administrator Curry – whose living conditions would have been positively luxurious compared to the settlement's Aboriginal population – who in February 1930 went on a destructive rampage, killing his own children and torching several buildings before he was shot by one of his own Aboriginal staffers.

In 1957 a series of incidents involving the colonial staff's treatment of Aboriginal women and a decision by the colonial administration to cut wages, led to a strike by the residents. The authorities responded by expelling 25 identified ringleaders of the resistance, and their families, from the island. A second strike occurred in 1974 when the colonial administration sacked the local Community Council and threatened to turn control of the island over to the City Council of Townsville – the nearest mainland city.

The Australian Government finally relinquished control of Palm Island – at least on paper – in 1985 when title for the island was passed to the Community Council in the form of a DOGIT (Deed of Grant in Trust). While this gave the residents a greater say in the administration of the island, the transfer of title led to the removal of much of the Government infrastructure. Soon after the decision was made, barges arrived and houses, shops, the timber mill and farming equipment were disassembled and shipped back to the mainland. The Aboriginal residents of Palm Island – some of them Manbarra people, indigenous to the island, many of them indigenous to elsewhere in Queensland and transported (or the descendents of those transported) to the settlement as punishment for their defiance of colonial authority – had their traditional ways of life stamped out and replaced with the poverty of colonial capitalist life by the white European occupiers over the course of 70 brutal years. Then, when they protested their slave-like conditions and insisted upon some semblance of independence, the Government punished them for their perceived ingratitude and removed everything it had taught them to rely upon.

In the 20 years since this event, familiar symptoms of social trauma and denigration have set in as a direct result of the poverty, appalling conditions and subsequent desperation of the community of Palm Island, who grapple with the weight of a common legacy of colonization: they are at once brutally oppressed and utterly abandoned. A Department of Public Works Director-General's briefing note records that in an 8 month period in 2003, there were 16 youth suicides and 8 domestic murders on the island. The community of 3500 indigenous people is squeezed into about 220 houses, averaging 17 people to a house. The unemployment rate on the island – remembering that the Aboriginal people comprising the community of Palm Island have had their traditional ways of life completely annihilated – is said to be around 95%. In the late 1990's, *The Guinness Book of Records* listed Palm Island, Australia's largest indigenous community, as the most violent place on earth outside of a war-zone. Here we see the extent of the damage Australia has done to its surviving indigenous communities; the legacy of colonization in its starkest tones.



Since the uprising, the Palm Island community has been vilified by the very political and cultural establishment that created its problems in the first place. Peter Lindsay, The Federal Member for Herbert (in which Palm Island is situated), for instance, recently called his constituents "dysfunctional" and "hopeless". Perhaps a reporter for the ABC went even further in revealing the true nature of Australia's supposed 'multi-culturism' and respect for its indigenous cultures: during the inquest into Mulrunjie Doomadgee's death (which at this writing is still in progress), legal representatives for Aboriginal witnesses requested interpreters for the witnesses, for whom English is not a first language (Aboriginal people are now at least permitted to speak their own languages on Palm Island). The reporter in question asked an Aboriginal spokesperson, "*why can't these people just speak English?*"

Aside from the unabashed white supremacist commentary of the occupying culture – which, by the way, has no more legal right to be occupying a single square inch of Australia than, say, the U.S military in Iraq – the Palm Island community has

been terrorized since the uprising by a paramilitary police force that has itself been nothing short of an army of occupation on the island. Indeed, well-respected Aboriginal activist Sam Watson responded to a question from the mainstream media about “violence in the Aboriginal community” in the wake of the riot thusly: “The only violence we’ve had in the Aboriginal community within the past few hours has been the tactical response force running through our homes and terrorising our old people and our children... We’ve had small children, eight and nine-year-olds, cast onto the ground and their heads forced into the dirt by these thugs in balaclavas with submachine guns. That sort of thing doesn’t even happen in Iraq.”

As well as verifying Watson’s shocking assertions, U.K. newspaper *The Guardian* (Australia’s corporate media has evidently been too busy wondering why residents of Palm Island won’t just speak English to bother reporting any of this repression) also reported that “police smashed down front doors of homes and stormed in with shotguns and riot shields. An alleged leader of the protests, Lex Wotton, was arrested by four car loads of police, who shot him with an immobiliser gun while he was stood with his hands up and the police guns were trained on him.”

More than 30 people were arrested by these methods – plus of course the countless people terrorized by the Tactical Response paramilitaries who weren’t taken into custody. 18 men, 3 womyn (one of them 65 years old) and 2 children (of undisclosed age) were charged, and eventually released on bail, but for many of them it was a condition of their bail that they could not return to Palm Island – not for the funeral of Mulrunjie Doomadgee, not to be with their families for Christmas, and not even if they were the sole provider for their families.

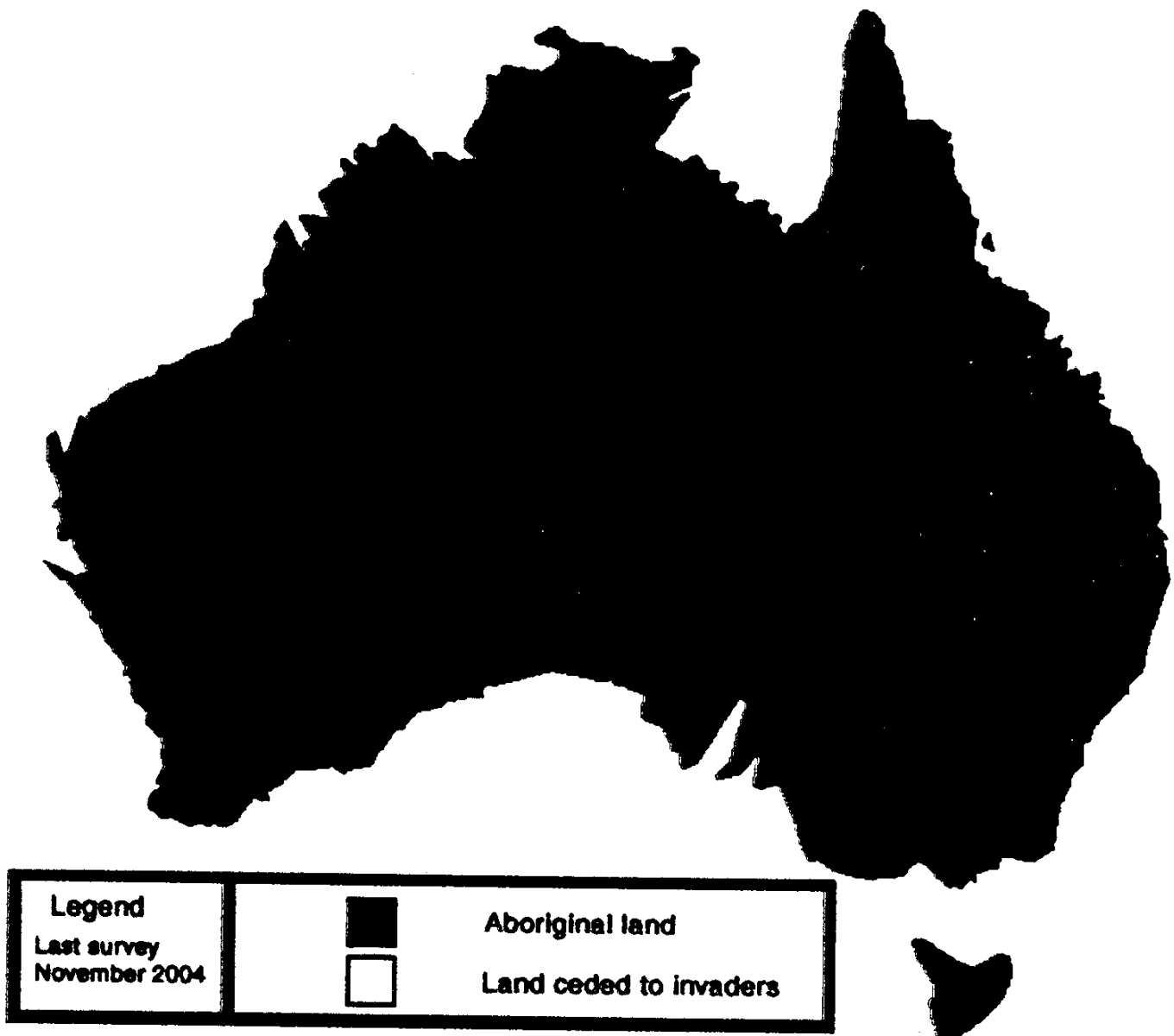
Meanwhile, the man clearly responsible for the violent demise of Mulrunjie Doomadgee, Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley – the arresting officer on the night he died, who was seen on top of Doomadgee, punching him, by another man arrested that night – was whisked away from the island soon after the death (“for his own safety”) and transferred to a cushy post on the Gold Coast, apparently rewarded rather than punished for the murder. As the inquest into Doomadgee’s death drags on it seems less and less likely that Hurley will ever face charges; but 23 of the men, womyn and children arrested so brutally on Palm Island face charges of ‘arson,’ ‘serious assault of police,’ ‘rioting with intent to cause damage to property’ and ‘riotous demolition of a building’ (and it could have been worse: a few days after the uprising the Queensland Police Union made a failed bid to ensure that the charges against those accused of firebombing Palm Island’s police station be upgraded to ‘attempted murder’, as there were cops hiding in there). The Queensland Police Union also launched a government-sponsored public appeal for donations to help the officers whose belongings were destroyed or stolen in the rebellion – this, of course, includes Hurley, whose house was burnt down (sadly not with him in it – he had already left the island). Perhaps a fat cheque helped ease Hurley’s disappointment at not being honored for his bravery – unbelievably, at least two of the 18 armed police who fled the 300-strong insurgency of 26th November were said by Queensland Police Minister Judy Spence to be in line to be awarded bravery medals!!!

Absurd double-standards, lies, hypocrisy, brazen racism, murderous police state brutality and repression; all of it part of an unbroken circle of occupation and genocide in this country that has been spinning continuously for 217 years and counting. There has been no great change in the megalomaniacal ideals or vicious conduct of the invading European culture that has colonized Australia. But indigenous resistance to this spinning circle of death and money, this McCulture™ of annihilation, *is* changing, *is* fluid. In Redfern in early 2004, we saw a small but militant reprisal from the Aboriginal community of the Block when a young Aboriginal boy was impaled on a fence while being chased by police [see *Arson #1*]. The Palm Island uprising less than a year later involved at least twice as many Aboriginal people, and, although there was little direct engagement with the cops (who were hopelessly outnumbered and thus beat a hasty retreat), the insurgency was both militant and focussed – the primary vestiges of colonial authority on the island (the police station, the courthouse) were attacked and destroyed outright. The Palm Island uprising also showed clear signs of *tactical awareness*, particularly in the blockading of the island's airstrip, preventing police reinforcements from arriving. This, in my view, is what elevates it from a riot – spontaneous, unfocussed, easily out-maneuvered, contained or crushed by a large enough enemy force – to an uprising, an insurgency, an insurrection.

But that's semantics. What we need to do is piece together what these recent ruptures in Australia's otherwise undisturbed colonial realities mean for us – anarchists, radicals, indigenous sovereignty advocates, environmentalists, anti-racists, criminals, malcontents; whatever space we occupy in the underbelly of occupied Australia. Because clearly, our standard practice – when we even bother – of giving lip-service to Aboriginal struggles as some kind of medication for our White Australian guilt-complex (whether we personally are white or not), is just not going to cut it anymore. The Aboriginal rebellions in Redfern and on Palm Island have been the only serious challenges to the colonial capitalist power structure in Australia in recent memory, and the fact is, to paraphrase Ward Churchill's *Pacifism as Pathology*, the rest of us are in danger of being left behind to feel good about ourselves (if that), while the revolution goes on without us.

So if we're serious about liberation in any way at all, we *must* find ways to contribute to the burgeoning Aboriginal militant resistance. Granted, the examples I have given here – Redfern and Palm Island – are clear cases of Aboriginal communities reaching a breaking point and spontaneously revolting against the colonial power structure as it manifests in their own community. But it's increasingly clear that *all* Aboriginal communities are approaching this breaking point, and so our options for how and where to contribute to the resistance are practically infinite – earning the trust and respect of Aboriginal communities with support and solidarity, furthering discussion and action around issues of Aboriginal sovereignty in the political circles we are already moving in, and I would say most important of all, readying *ourselves* for militant resistance in a very serious way.

At Redfern and Palm Island, the Aboriginal Nations of this country let it be known that, after more than 200 years of genocide, they are not about to be pushed over the brink without a fight. Now we must all decide to stop waiting for provocation, and finally carry the fight to our enemy.



Sources worth checking out:

<http://itwillbethundering.resist.ca>

<http://pariah.alturl.com>

<http://palm-island-news.newslib.com>

http://didjshop.com.au/Aboriginal_news_comments.html

The change of wind is coming.

Brace yourself for the big change - get ready.

The Fire Creator for Justice is awoken. The power of the fire is alive and moving and rekindling the fire of the spirit.

The time has come to cure the evil, right the wrongs.

The Whiteman came to Australia the wrong way.

When he entered our waters and our land he came the wrong way.

Coming the wrong way was like starting off on the wrong foot.

He brought with him the evil.

If he had come the right way, the massacres, the poisoned water, the stolen generations, the deaths in custody, the pain and misery, the land theft... would not have happened.

...The time has come to face reality - you cannot hide the truth anymore.

The Old Spirit and the old, old Ancient Country are about to unleash an awakening energy. You have your ancient responsibility and

obligation to right the wrongs of the events that took place since Invasion.

Do not feel threatened. All people should come and participate, share and experience the changes and end the jurisdiction of the occupying power which tries to dominate our lives.

We have the right to live, the right to life, the right to self-determination, the right to decolonization, the right to sovereignty for certainty. We encourage people to come forward...

Those with this churning feeling for change.

Since Invasion all we've seen is the Crown and paper and oppression.

But we have the key for survival in this land. Our ancient knowledge is like an untapped resource for survival. It can take us all home.

The Old Country is talking now. The Old Spirit is stirring, singing up the country, empowering the fire of the Spirit, curing the evil.

The Fire will burn

until Justice prevails.

The Fire is the thing that will make or break you.

The Fire is the healing that can take all lost souls home, that will fix you up and enable to share the responsibility to care for our Ancient Country.

If you are sincere you should support us.

Stop running around in circles.

- Kevin Buzzacott,
Arabunna Nation

CALL TO VIOLENCE

By Kevin Gilbert,
Wiradjuri Nation

(1973)

TONY (THE SEEDING . . .)

I remember Mumma—when the baby came along
We were livin' at the old Trelawney place
And we couldn't get a doctor he was much too far
away
And we hadn't any money so he wouldn't treat
OUR race
Daddy lived on station handouts for the bit of
work he did
And we ate off the wild rabbits that he caught
Or when we were real hungry he would go and steal
a sheep
He'd laugh and bring it in the door 'Look what I've
bought!'
But the laughter slowly faded as my mumma's
time drew near
Her body hunchin' tightly up with pain
The crinkle lines upon his face grew deep and dark
with fear
As he rode out for the doctor who would not come,
again.

I remember Mumma when the baby came along
With her hands screwed tight around the old
bedstead
Her dear, dear body twitching, screaming all that
awful night
Till silence came with morning—both were dead.
Now we live back on the mission and my daddy is
a drunk
Its not as nice as old Trelawney place
I'm gonna be a doctor when I grow up some day
Or a soldier—captain maybe and I'll fight for my
black race!

Yeah, I'll fight 'em on my own some day so no one
else gits hurt
And I'll shoot their soldiers—every bloody man
Until they know the wrong they do and why my
mumma died
Yeah, one day I'm gonna shoot right back—
I'LL MAKE them understand! !

THE FLOWERING . . .

When the white man took his bloodied boot
From the neck of the buggared black
Did you expect some gratitude
His smile 'Good on you Jack?'
When your psalmist sang
Of a suffering Christ
While you practised genocide
Did you expect his hate would fade
Out of sight with the ebbing tide?
In another time, another age
If fate had reversed the play
And a hard black boot pressed on your white
throat
When released—what would *you* say
Friends and pals forever together in a new fair
dawn
Or meet like you and I shall meet
With flames and with daggers drawn.

The 1967 Referendum gave a huge 'yes' vote for full citizenship rights for Aborigines. Many blacks thought that at last a new deal for black people was imminent. The disillusionment after 1967 hit hard. It is little wonder that younger, more literate blacks began to search for their values in the literature of the Black Panther movement of the United States. They read somewhere about how some white fat cat reckoned that Australia was a 'lucky country' and said 'Yeah, for the gub-

bahs'. Once again they are told of a case of rape of a black girl and hear the oft told tale that the coppers regard sex offences against blacks *with great tolerance*. If blacks get drunk, they get busted and cop-bullied not because they are drunk so much, but because they're *black* and drunk. I mean it—just ask yourselves whether you ever see the cops waiting to catch 'em reeling out of the RSL at night. It would be more than a cop would dare. The young blacks remember how the white kids sniggered at them in high school. (That's what made them leave—despite all the good offices of the Secondary Schools Grant.) They've probably heard the president of the Aboriginal Advancement Association back on the reserve trying to make himself and his listeners believe that, 'If we just wait a bit longer, the whites *will* help us, things *will* get better.' They've probably walked out of the meeting to go and get drunk. There's some reality in that. So they come to the city and some black shows them what Malcolm X, an American black, said:

So don't you run around trying to make friends with somebody who's depriving you of your rights. They're not your friends, no, they're your enemies. Treat them like that and fight them, and you'll get freedom; and after you get your freedom, your enemy will respect you.

They read it and it figures, it makes sense.

Or perhaps they read Frederick Douglass:

The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. [And] If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favour freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without ploughing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

And that makes sense too.

Many country Aborigines are afraid of 'Black Power' because to them it has meant urban Aborigines descending on their town, kicking up hell about something, usually pub or

wage discrimination, and clearing out. The local blacks are left, undefended, to cop the inevitable white reprisals. Nevertheless, the idea of Black Power has enabled many Aborigines, especially the younger generation, to lift their heads towards a vision of hope and a new dignity. It has brought a subtle change to many of the most down-trodden, frightened communities and it is no accident that all blacks who knew of the Embassy and understood its aims, hailed its message—land rights for black Australia. Concurrent with this is the fact that blacks everywhere are no longer just accepting but are volubly questioning the squalor, the purposelessness, the waste of their lives and the social condition they find themselves in.

Black Power, as symbol, signifies the return to pride, to manhood, for Aborigines who have long ago lost the status of men. It will provide a new identity-image, this time positive. It will, in time, spell the end of the drunken 'give us two bob mate' cur who slinks up to you in a country town. It will provide an avenue of expression. Black Power is a very new concept in this country and, unlike its American counterpart, has produced little real violence to date. The violent scenes that were a feature when the Embassy was ripped down were, all participants and spectators agree, police initiated, with the blacks only defending themselves and their tent.

Expressed positively, Black Power means black men and black women speaking out and uniting to force the white man to acknowledge their humanity, rights, justice, dignity and right to self-determination. It is the voice of a dispossessed, victimized minority making a fair, human claim. Expressed negatively, it becomes disillusionment and frustration which is expressed not by alcoholic self-destruction as in the past, but by violence against the white persecutors. I asked Charles Perkins how things would develop if tribal and urban blacks were once again short-changed after a period of hope, as happened after 1967. Would there be violence? Said he:

Some groups probably will [turn to it]. It must be part and parcel of their development if frustration continues. Violence will be part and parcel of Aboriginal affairs in the future. It just can't be any other way. It will probably

happen anyway, regardless of what good measures are going to be implemented by the Labor government. It is going to happen in some areas, as a spontaneous thing. It has happened in the last two or three years quite dramatically on lots of missions and reserves. A can has been put on this, to keep it quiet. Nobody knows about it at all. Yet it has happened frequently. It has to be expected because the people have been suppressed for so long and they're just sick and tired of promises, programmes, pilot projects and being told what to do by the white bosses and administrators. Having things planned for them by people who don't really have their interest at heart. Being deceived and denied things. I think they are just going to hit out.

As I attended meetings and asked questions both of city and outback blacks, the idea of impending violence came through repeatedly both from the articulate blacks and from those whose depth of pain and hatred had left them almost incoherent on the subject. And over and over again they stressed that violence is necessary, not as aggression so much (although that is part of it) as for *defence*, defence against police persecution and acts of small-town and city bullying by whites. As Paul Coe put it:

I don't believe any Aboriginal will initiate violence. But I believe that, like all groups around the world who have been colonized, Aborigines will take a defensive role. They will ensure that they survive as a race. They will ensure that their kids don't keep dying from malnutrition, that they will not be used and abused as cheap labour. I think that when you take into account the institutionalized violence that most Aborigines have to live under and their psychic reactions against it, then you've got to find a way, some kind of defensive mechanism that allows the people to survive as a race and I think that one day, the outgrowth of this, of Aboriginal men and women picking up guns, will be just. To me, the idea that the Aboriginal people will one day pick up the gun, to use it perhaps, to build their own separate state or find some

other way of ensuring that the race *does* survive, is a just one. It's something that I'm not frightened of because it is something that's just got to happen. I see that there will be no alternative. . . .

Even the more conservative elements agree on this. Neville Bonner stated, after the fall of the Embassy, a peaceful black demonstration, 'I can't see how violence can be avoided now'. Pastor Frank Roberts commented,

The militants have become a creative force—creative for the betterment of the Aboriginal people in their own way. There is definitely a place for militancy. We cannot remain docile too much longer . . . we *must* assert ourselves. I think that if this government fails the Aboriginal people now, if it falls down on its promises and betrays the Aborigines it will be a bad day for the Australian people.

On the face of it, Aboriginal violence against white Australia is somewhat like a gnat challenging an elephant. Blacks in this country are historically a non-violent, peaceable people. The white race has always been keen to turn to violence, especially if it is against blacks, so they wouldn't take much provoking to turn on the big guns against a troublesome black minority. Such were the considerations of ex-army man Gerry Bostock when he said, apropos black violence:

If violence erupts, the blacks will be annihilated because they haven't got the manpower or the financial resources . . . There *will* be violence, but the blacks will lose in the end.

Perhaps there will be a new black soon. A black, who, completely alienated, will consider that to lose in the end is not too great a price to pay to re-purchase the manhood of the Aboriginal race. Figure it out. How many white men would stand by and watch their children dying from starvation and neglect? Watch them being oppressed and stigmatized? Watch them being crippled? Perhaps the cost will be some black

martyrs. And they won't come from the ranks of the fashionably dressed, TV pomaded, Afro-frizzed public blacks. It is a different black that I have in mind. You see them at black meetings. They never speak up. They never draw attention to themselves. They get a bit bored with the rhetoric of Black Power, because, essentially, they are doers, not talkers. They only perk up when someone suggests a line of action, because this has real meaning. So, when someone suggests that it's time for a demo outside Parliament House in Sydney, or perhaps we should storm Pinchgut or, let's go and camp on Waddy's lawn, it's 'Yeah, let's go'. There is no fear. They are ready for action and only need good leadership to become an effective kamikaze force. Ten years ago their type all became hopeless reserve drunks. Today they don't, for now they have been given a purpose. I believe it is these blacks who will achieve a return to manhood for Aboriginal men.

There are dreams about . . . vague plans of how blacks could form guerilla bands. Get a few with the bushmanship of a Lionel Brockman and you'd have quite an effective force provided you could get the thing financed by outside sympathizers. In the USA, whenever white society does another rotten thing to blacks, black resentment expresses itself in terms of dragging whites out of cars and giving them a hiding, or summer ghetto riots, or by firing a building full of white tenants. That, say Aborigines with whom I have discussed these things, is maybe OK if you number 22 million. But when you are as tiny a minority as blacks in this country, you have to act less on emotion and more with the intellect. Say a black girl is forced into sex with some coppers in South Australia. It's no good, obviously, complaining to the cops. And of course, the same cops have got tabs on all the local blacks. But if these blacks could alert a central group which could organize for a punitive group from another state to move in to take the justice denied to them by the white system and then move out of the region just as quickly, it would be quite a different thing. It would not be difficult to enforce secrecy amongst blacks and, were a type of 'cell' system used, working through a central group, any leaks that did occur could be quickly pin-pointed and sealed without undue fuss. Provided

adequate organization was kept, only a handful of people in each state would be needed to form a guerilla force against white violence.

Some blacks stress that there is no sense in having blind-rage reprisals against white people whose only crime is that they happen to have been born with a white skin. They stress that a guerilla system would eliminate much of the injustice to innocent by-standers, both white and black, that characterizes the Black Power uprisings of the USA. There is no profit either in hurting innocent whites to whom no personal blame for the state blacks are in can be attached and who might very well support the Aboriginal cause. Similarly, there is no profit in needlessly causing a white reaction on a scale which would turn into a race war. However there *is* profit in the concept of fast moving reprisal units that can sink out of sight into any black population after bringing a measure of justice to a pre-selected figure who has a record of racist bullying in any area.

Of course blacks realize that with conditions as they are today, there is still a large element of romance in these ideas. Probably Aborigines will have to wait at least one, if not more generations before they can fund and organize themselves to this extent. And, some blacks argue, the best action is not against the white man's person, but against his property, for property is his god. Reprisals against white injustice would, in this view, be better directed against petrol, electricity or gas installations. Against dams, bridges, railways and aerodromes. Against foreign-owned ships, to get a focus of international publicity. Or mass poisoning of the waterholes of stud stock could be thought about. Wheat fields and forests could be razed, using chemical substances that ignite after a delay.

That blacks have got to the point of dreaming such dreams is in itself an indictment of Australia's treatment of its black people. It is incredible, considering Australia's affluence, that a peaceful race of people should be forced to fight to attain justice in the land of their fathers.

It may, in time, be proven that it is necessary to do this. We should remember the words of that great patriot Mahatma Gandhi in answer to a question on the use of violence in the defence of rights (published in *The Guardian*, 16/12/38):

Where the choice is set between cowardice and violence I would advise violence. I praise and extol the serene courage of dying without killing. Yet I desire that those who have not this courage should rather cultivate the art of killing and being killed, than basely to avoid the danger. This is because he who runs away commits mental violence; he has not the courage of facing death by killing. I would a thousand times prefer violence than

the emasculation of a whole race. I prefer to use arms in defence of honour rather than remain the vile witness of dishonour.

"In a gloomy bar where everyone is bored to death, a drunken young man breaks his glass, then picks up a bottle and smashes it against the wall. Nobody gets excited; the disappointed young man lets himself be thrown out. Yet everyone there could have done exactly the same thing. He alone made the thought concrete, crossing the first radioactive belt of isolation: interior isolation, the introverted separation between self and the outside world. Nobody responded to a sign which he thought was explicit. He remained alone like the hooligan who burns down a church or kills a policeman, at one with himself, but condemned to exile as long as other people remain exiled from their own existence. He has not escaped from the magnetic field of isolation; he is suspended in a zone of zero gravity. All the same, the indifference which greets him allows him to hear the sound of his own cry; even if this revelation tortures him, he knows that he will have to start again in another register, more loudly, with more coherence.

People will be together only in a common wretchedness as long as each isolated being refuses to understand that a gesture of liberation, however weak and clumsy it may be, always bears an authentic communication, an adequate personal message. The repression which strikes down the liberation rebel falls on everyone: everyone's blood flows with the blood of a murdered Durruti.

Whenever freedom retreats one inch, there is a hundred-fold increase in the weight of the order of *things*."

- Raoul Vaneigem,
*The Revolution of
Everyday Life*

LIKE LIGHTNING AGAINST A HOLLOW LIMB:



THOUGHTS ON PRIMAL GUERRILLA WARFARE - PART 1

By Kevin Tucker

PLEASE NOTE: This is not an argument for or surrounding the reality of collapse, anarcho-primitivist critique, questions of wildness, or what a post-collapse world may look like – you'll find that elsewhere (much of it I've discussed in some depth in *Species Traitor* 4). This is explicitly intended to lay out and explore tactical questions for those who recognize civilization as their enemy, its collapse as inevitable (regardless of how long 'inevitable' might be), and that action must be taken against it.

I've never been involved in guerrilla warfare. And I've never wanted to be.

I have no innate hunger for violence or for a life on the run or any lust for the warrior imagery. I have, however, had to come to terms with the situation that we are currently facing and the direction we are heading in. That is, the direction a dying civilization is taking us in.

In short, I have come to realize that this civilization, like all before it, is going to collapse. Being a global civilization driven by a massive technological infrastructure, it just means that this collapse is going to be equally massive and leaving the civilized infrastructure with nowhere new to spread and exploit. The technological lifeblood of this civilization is running thin with the looming end of cheap oil and a complete lack of substitutes as social, physical and ecological catastrophes climax.

The collapse *is* happening.

The collapse of civilization is a process rather than an event. Like civilization, it is not something external. It is not something happening to us or around us. It is our reality and it is a necessary process. Whether we like it or not, this is happening and it will continue to get much worse before it gets better. And I'm afraid of just how much worse it is going to get.

When I talk about civilization, I'm referring to a totality: that is the concrete structures of the city and countryside as well as the mentalities that

create and maintain them. In response, I've put forward the idea of a primal war: a war against the domestication process and civilization itself. This is not necessarily the physical thing that we associate with war. There are no battlefields, there are no armies. Primal war is about overcoming the mentality of the domesticators, realizing the primal urges that they have curbed, returning to wildness, and confronting the physical aspects of civilization.

I've been somewhat vague about what I think primal war means, and intentionally so. I have no faith in revolutions or similar types of movements. If this is going to be something sincere, on a personal level, it must come from within. I can give my take on everything, but I'm not offering a party line or agenda.

At least that's the limit for a grand vision of how things might turn. But considering the larger context of collapse, there isn't the optional luxury of being vague. Primal war is about being proactive. It is about accepting our place within civilization and its demise and acting on it rather than practicing routine and preparing while we wait for the dust to settle. It requires agitation and confrontation, not only on a rhetorical or psychological level, but on a physical level as well.

I have never wanted to take on a dying civilization, but am left with little other option. For the sake of ourselves, our bioregions, communities (future if not present), and wildness, an undesirable situation brings about undesirable responses. At some point, we are going to have to fight, both defensively and offensively, against this civilization and its remnants.

I am not a military or strategic expert. I am not a scholar of guerrilla war or resistance movements. I am not a technician or mechanic. My intent here is not to write a textbook for primal guerrilla warfare, but to give some direction for others to take further. That is in terms of both defensive and offensive action. I'm offering an evaluation of past guerrilla activities and their relevance or irrelevance to where we are headed.

This is critique and application for those who, like myself, fear and welcome the collapse, and are no longer content to merely sit on the sidelines.

GUERRILLAS AND PRIMAL GUERRILLAS

What links primal guerrilla warfare and more typical guerrilla warfare is a matter of tactical approach.

Guerrilla warfare is not standard warfare. It is not engaged on battlefields. It is not equally sized and armed forces taking each other straight on. It is the way that a smaller, less armed force takes on a larger or more established military or state power. For the most part, it has been the tool of revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries worldwide. And it is this connection to revolution which has dictated exactly how and what kind of targets and activities make up that guerrilla warfare.

We'll start with the revolutionary guerrillas.

Perhaps no other revolutionary guerrilla has made a name for themselves like Che Guevara. To a degree, it's a well-deserved position. The role of guerrilla warfare in the Cuban revolution was pivotal in the larger chain of events. Based on his experiences there, Che would write the formulaic textbook for undertaking guerrilla warfare in a broader sense. Unfortunately for him, that formula didn't prove to be universal: he died while playing it out in Bolivia.

But his death says more about the nature of guerrilla warfare and revolution than what his book alone can say (which does have some finer points, which we will return to). For revolutionary guerrilla warfare to be successful, you need that larger revolution. The role of guerrilla warfare is not to topple the state on its own, but to get things moving and to expose the weaknesses of the state to the general population enough for them to unify in opposition to it. Simply put, you need mass support or you'll fight an all too bloody battle well beyond any point for potential success. (I'm thinking here particularly of the remnants of the Shining Path in Peru and FARC in Columbia, both failing to gain much support as their unending wars drag on turning increasingly to terrorizing indigenous and peasant populations into joining their ranks on par with the state.).

The situation in Cuba was ripe. You had a standing totalitarian government whose oppression was unquestionable, clearly cut class divisions between the rapidly modernizing state and racist tourism industry and the wider Cuban populace, and blatantly corrupt funneling of outside disaster support for recent earthquakes which shook the island nation: a situation which brewed contempt for those in power, while leaving the promised life of modernity just close enough to see and feel, but not enough to grab. Though largely unsuccessful in a strategic sense, the first actions of the Cuban revolutionary guerrillas drew attention to an underlying current and exposed not only the hope and anger that many felt, but a glimpse of what could happen.

Though a number of key revolutionaries at this point were communists, the revolutionary propaganda was not. Fidel's early stance was liberal populism, like many of the Latin American revolutionaries. And that was the face of the revolt that people were seeing. Che was one of the communists, as all of Cuba would become within a couple years of the revolution. The 'success' in Cuba was just one victory for communist sympathy throughout the Latin American populace, which has largely felt and still feels the brute force of colonial turned imperial pressures rarely broke down class barriers.

So you had some support in Bolivia; peasants, urban poor and college students like in Cuba. But Che was unable to predict that the goals of the communist resistance were no more appealing than the goals of the state to the native Kayapó population, whose support he was naively counting on. And they had good reason; communists embraced the same modernity that the democratic and totalitarian (for all they can be separated) governments dangled before the people. Indigenous, largely self-sufficient populations have

rarely had much interest in revolutions because modernity runs against what they know and feel. They've almost always wanted only one thing: to be left alone.

There was not enough solidarity and so the revolt failed.

Primal guerrilla warfare has more in common with the goals of the Kayapó, the highlanders of Papua New Guinea, and other earth bound societies world wide: we want to be left alone. That doesn't mean allowed to live, or given the right to live, or given the chance to purchase our freedom/s, and it certainly doesn't end on reserves or reservations. To be left alone means to live in the way that humans have lived for millions of years: without work, without technological systems, without governments, and as part of a wider, sane environment.

In the world of modernized civilization, this isn't about personal desires, it is about anti-political aspirations. This life is antithetical to civilized existence which must spread, must devour, and must destroy the earth. While it exists, we can never be left alone. We cannot live with factories, power plants, mines, oil spills, tree farms, fur farms, concrete, and microwaves. And even though all of these things are killing us and dropping the chances of human survival rapidly, they cannot be stopped through the system which creates them. You can't end civilization through politics. No one is going to vote out electricity.

And most people are not going to give up the system that is killing and enslaving them.

That is a basic reality that we are going to have to come to terms with. That doesn't mean there's no point in talking with people or anything like that. There is always plenty of common space between two beings for making a connection. With most it comes through a hatred of work, with others it comes through an interest in becoming self-sufficient, there are all kinds of different frustrations people have arising from an innate feeling that there is something wrong with the world we're being sold.

These channels are what revolutionaries count on being able to tap. This is what they must do to be successful. Intent dictates action. To reach the people, actions taken must be strategic in the same way that propaganda is created. Any attacks on the state are done to try to weaken those holding power, not the State itself: that level of political and social institutions that bind an urbanized society together. Revolutionaries need the infrastructure intact, because they plan on using it. As far as classical Marxist thinking goes, this is a matter of social evolution that the capitalists create a level of industrial society that is intended to be turned over to a socialist state and then the communist utopia.

This is where primal guerrilla warfare parts ways.

The goal of the 'attacks' that I'm calling primal guerrilla warfare are not to slow a particular government down, but to destroy the base of it and any other potential government. In this way, the term 'warfare' might be more misleading. As we'll see, there is every reason to believe that at some point,

physical confrontation with other people may be inevitable, but people are not the targets here: *things* are. More to the point, our targets are the kind of things that make electricity (the new opiate of the masses and iron fist of the state) possible.

In terms of guerrilla warfare, this isn't particularly new thinking. Nearly every revolution of the past century has made strategic attacks on electric distribution systems. But strategic in a more immediate sense, such as the way FARC regularly disables outlying power substations so that they can rob banks and loot other necessary equipment. They're not out to permanently disrupt electrical networks. There are exceptions too: knowing full well that the entire reason the Middle East was colonized, cut up, redistributed and been the focus of war over the past century and a half is 'resources' (though now almost exclusively oil), Iraqi insurgents have taken to burning the precious oil fields and reserves in the Gulf. They realized that the costs far outweigh any benefits.

The real connection here is with counter-revolutionary guerrilla warfare. That is when outside governments, like the U.S., don't think highly of the political and economic implications of successful revolutions in places like El Salvador, and, in turn, directly support and train Contra forces to make sure that the government is never able to assert itself in that initial transition period. These attacks largely take the form of sabotage on the economic and political lifelines of any state. That means digging up chunks of major roadways, blowing apart railways, taking out power stations, substations, and vital cables, cutting off major ports, keeping down phone lines and other communications networks.

They attack these things in a way that revolutionaries don't, because they can. They have the funding and ability to bring it all back online. Revolutionaries typically don't. They know that any state needs these things (at least currently), because they need them as well. And this is the leverage states have against revolutions and just one more reason why it is easier to disable the whole system than to take it over and go from there.

I can't overemphasize this point. This is the underlying distinction between primal guerrilla warfare and any other type of guerrilla warfare. And the implications of this will only become clearer as we look further into the underlying motivations, applied technical skill, knowledge and enactment of primal guerrilla warfare.

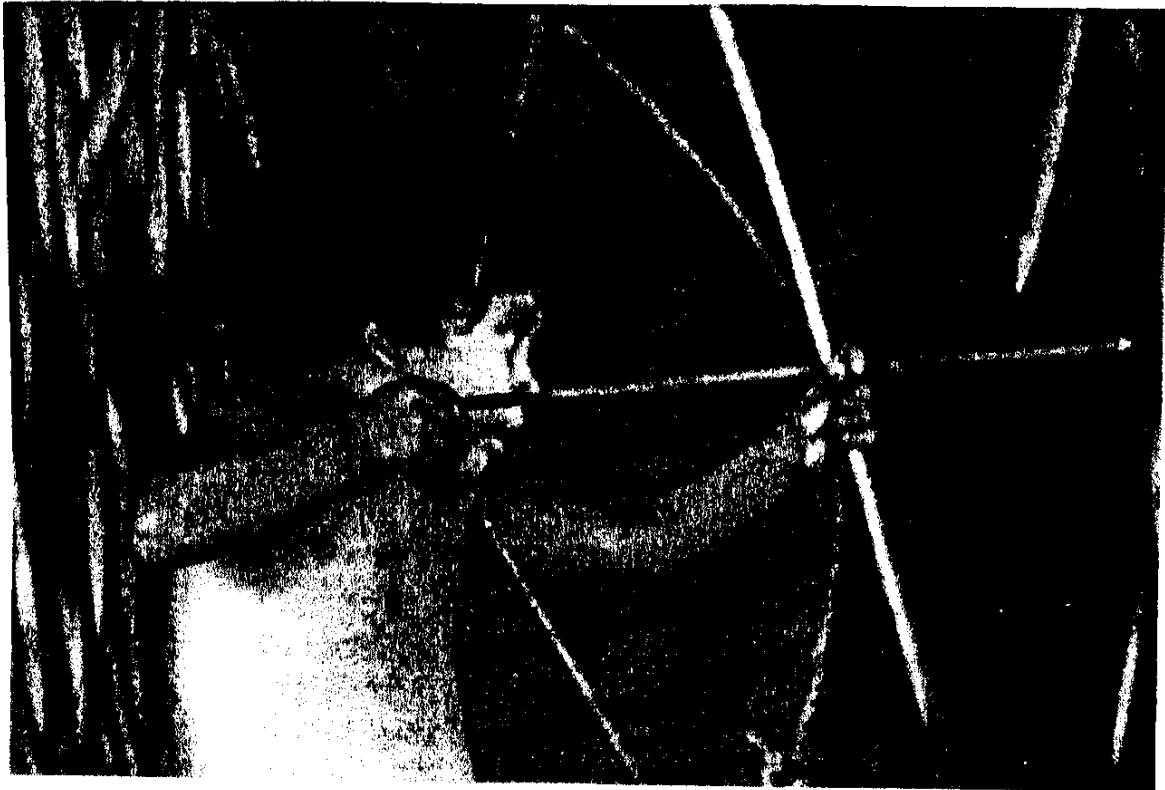
THE NATURE OF PRIMAL WAR

Primal war certainly didn't begin with me. The term may be new, but the emotion and rage of being confined to an external order goes back to the rooting of domestication.

Regardless of what you call it, it is there. For most of us, it comes out as hatred of work, or of school or laws. It's the drain of spending your waking hours doing things that make self-sufficiency nearly impossible, or the feeling of having to wake up for someone else. Or it's like when you get your

paycheck and utter a thank you when the money was already used up to pay for bills and food weeks ago. There is a choking feeling of never being able to get out of debt: a debt that binds us to jobs in stores, factories and kitchens just as it bound our ancestors to turn fields of crops, tear down ancestral forests, dig canals, and wipe out their neighbors.

Powerlessness has become our ancestral heritage and pathological bondage.



In wildness, there is no true control. You can't control everything that can and will happen to you. But this lack of complete control is not like the powerlessness we feel. All beings do things that have strong effects on the lives of others. That is the nature of being, living and existing. You don't have complete control, but nothing has complete control over you.

Domestication, by its nature, changed that relationship. Though only in minute and sometimes frivolous ways during its long inception period, the very word: to make for domestic use, implies the violence of breaking a wild spirit so that it can be turned into controlled fodder. That applies to domesticated humans as much as it does the plants, animals and environments that have been brought under this perceived realm of domination.

And it turns inwards. When our world has been put in terms of control, we can only see it that way. We respond to the lack of control we have over our lives as a whole and embrace the minor choices we can make as a sign of our control. We become psychological predators: embracing the carrot dangled before our eyes and waving our piece of it before others as an example of our level of control.

A part of the rewilding process means coming to terms with our lack of control. And rather than seeing this as the powerlessness we feel in the

hierarchy of civilized society, using this as a vantage point to understand that wildness is not about a Darwinian battle for survival or the dialectic of nature, but about the flow of energy.

That is cooperation rather than competition. And that is the underlying distinction between civilization and wildness.

Flow has long been an essential part of martial arts. It applies the basic principles of wildness to understand and better utilize the human body and then spread outwards. The rigorous training is meant to condition and imprint the muscles with certain types of movement, but beyond this, the underlying element of nearly every form of martial arts is that you cannot control what movements your opponent/s will make, but when you see how their energy flows, you can redirect it and use it against them.

This is as important an exercise as it is a lesson. And with our limited ability to see wildness on its own terms, this will have to be a vantage point for our discussion.

I'll get into the importance of martial arts as training in a later section, but flow is about more than fighting, it's about looking differently at the way the world interconnects, and that is applicable on every level. By applying this to the nature of technological civilization, it helps to understand how it carries on and where its weaknesses are (a lesson indigenous resistors have been successful in pushing on). This understanding is essential to the process of rewilding. It has been said that you can survive off of primitive skills, but the ability to live in wildness comes through primal knowledge and primitive life ways as a holistic approach rather than just having a hammer stone instead of a hammer. And the same goes for applying this in your personal life: it is about understanding the nature of powerlessness rather than just looking at where control lies. It is about understanding what it means to be up against a system that is both psychological and physical.

Taken together, this is an entire way of approaching the world rather than just a laundry list of what is good and bad. And it is about efficiently targeting that system. Revolutionaries, never questioning the issues of control, have only sought to reassert their power the only way they know it: be it reclaiming their labor, or their land (usually meaning their farms), or through religion. You take back your labor, but you still have to work. It's a never-ending cycle, and one that fails to recognize the source of that innate feeling of unease about the direction our lives are heading.

And in this sense, revolutionaries only replace one philosophy with another. They put all their trust in the world that lies awaiting and the assurance that the Revolution will change everything. But rewilding, the anti-domestication process, is not something proscribed or some path to follow. It is about establishing connections on a personal and unmediated level. There are skills and words that can give direction, but it's not about waiting for the Revolution or Insurrection to create or unleash something within: it is about finding that here and now.

You can't touch wildness, but you can feel it. It's something knowable.

Communism, socialism, and anarchism, like Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism, are ideas that we believe in time will prove themselves true. You wait, you act and you're either wrong or you're not, but these are causes. These are matters of belief rather than experience (or, in the case of religion, dictated experience).

The nature of primal war lies in these feelings and experiences, not just the ideas of them. Like anything, there is always the risk that this becomes rhetoric rather than genuine, and certainly with some people it has. But the real difference lies in the attainable nature of wildness. It creates a known conviction unlike a known belief.

But most of us have never known what its like to live among a wild community. We haven't had that experience, at least not with a wild human community. But the steps are there and with growing strength, they are being taken. It's part of the larger process.

And, as I said earlier, that is a process that goes back way before us.

Primal guerrilla warfare is no more recent than primal war. That is in terms of reality instead of terminology. We can look immediately towards the type of resistance earth based societies have taken against colonizers and the armies of expanding states.

Largely, the concepts of conquering and complete annihilation have no point of comparison in indigenous societies. They don't have that created competitive drive that fills mass graves. What colonizers were doing was often not seen for what it was because it was so unthinkable. But, this was not always the case. There was never a completely successful case of conquering without resistance. And where that resistance laid, though only a footnote in history, it was hardly insignificant.

As we'll see in more detail in the next section, the very nature of a wild life puts everything in place for would-be guerrilla warriors. Hunting is about stealth, evasion, tracking, and stalking. Making your own tools makes you less likely to be wasteful and pushes you to practice aim under any number of circumstances. Foraging and trekking make you more aware of your surroundings and give a deeper insight into the nature of ecosystems.

These are just a few general elements of the awareness that spread from necessity and the flow of wild living. But more to the point for our purposes here, all of this comes together in a spiritual sense. That's just the way humans have interpreted our relationship with our bioregions and communities. And a part of that is a sense of being defined not by territory or boundaries or something external, but between the complete interconnectedness of beings: the realization that we are not an isolated Self in competition with the external Other. Life is wound up with community, both human and non-human.

When you understand life in this way and have this kind of connection, you wind up with primal warriors who fight in defense of what they know rather than over ideals (like the spread of Democracy and Freedom, for

example). This is heart and soul, not fodder. And this is an incorruptible desire to remain wild. And this is the kind of spirit of resistance that has been nearly universal when it comes to the defense of indigenous societies against this global empire.

This is the spirit of primal war. And this is something no revolutionary could ever understand.

[Part 2 of this work in progress will appear next issue.]



Population and Environment

By Ward Churchill

Excerpted from the author's essay 'I Am Indigenist', as published in *Acts of Rebellion: The Ward Churchill Reader*.

...The population of indigenous nations everywhere has always been determined by the number of people that could be sustained in a given environment or bioregion without overpowering and thereby destroying that environment. A very carefully calculated balance – one which was calibrated to the fact that in order to enjoy certain sorts of material comfort, human population had to be kept at some level below saturation – was always maintained between the number of humans and the rest of the habitat. In order to accomplish this, native peoples have always incorporated into the very core of our spiritual traditions the concept that all life forms and the earth itself possess rights equal to those enjoyed by humans.

Rephrased, this means it would be a violation of a fundament of traditional indigenous law to supplant or eradicate another species, whether animal or plant, in order to make way for some greater number of humans, or to increase the level of material comfort available to those who already exist. Conversely, it is a fundamental requirement of traditional law that each human accept his or her primary responsibility, that of maintaining the balance and harmony of the natural order *as it is encountered*. One is essentially free to do anything one wants in an indigenous society so long as this cardinal rule is adhered to. ...Carrying capacity is a fairly constant reality; it tends to change over thousands of years, when it changes at all.

What I'm going to say next will probably startle a few people... I think this principle of population restraint is the single most important example Native North America can set for the rest of humanity. It is *the* thing which it is most crucial for others to emulate. Check it out. I recently heard that Japan, a small island nation which has so many people that they're literally tumbling into the sea, and which has exported about half again as many people as live on the home islands, is expressing "official concern" that its birth rate has declined very slightly over the last few years. The worry is that in thirty years there'll be fewer workers available to "produce", and thus to "consume" whatever it is that's produced. Ever ask yourself what it is that's used in "producing" something? Or what it is that's being "consumed"? Yeah. You got it. Nature is being consumed, and with it the ingredients that allow ongoing human existence. It's true that nature can replenish some of what is consumed, but only at a certain rate. That rate has been vastly exceeded, and the extent of excess is increasing by the moment. An overburgeoning humanity is killing the natural world, and thus itself. It's no more complicated than that.

Here we are in the midst of a rapidly worsening environmental crisis of truly global proportions, every last bit of it attributable to a wildly accelerating human consumption of the planetary habitat, and you have one of the world's major offenders expressing grave concern that the rate at which it is able to consume might actually drop a notch or two. *Think* about it. I suggest that this attitude signifies nothing so much as stark, staring madness. It is insane: suicidally, homicidally, ecocidally, *omnicidally* insane. No, I'm not being rhetorical. I meant what I've just said in the most literal way possible, but I don't want to convey the misimpression that I see the Japanese as being in this respect unique. Rather, I intend them to serve as merely an illustration of a far broader and quite virulent pathology called "industrialism" – or, lately, "postindustrialism" – a sickness centered in an utterly obsessive drive to dominate and destroy the natural order. (Words like "production," "consumption," "development," and "progress" are mere code words masking this reality).

It's not only the industrialized countries which are afflicted with this dis-ease. One byproduct of the past five centuries of European expansionism and the resulting hegemony of eurocentric ideology is that the latter has been drummed into the consciousness of *most* peoples to the point where it is now subconsciously internalized. Everywhere, you find people thinking it "natural" to view themselves as the incarnation of god on earth – i.e., "created in the image of God" – and thus duty-bound to "exercise dominion over nature" in order that they can "multiply, grow plentiful, and populate the land" in ever increasing "abundance."

The legacy of the forced labor of the latifundia and inculcation of Catholicism in Latin America is a tremendous overburden of population devoutly believing that "wealth" can be achieved (or is defined) by having ever *more* children. The legacy of Mao's implementation of "reverse technology" policy – the official encouragement of breakneck childbearing rates in his already overpopulated country, solely as a means to deploy massive labor power to offset capitalism's "technological advantage" in production – resulted in a tripling of China's population in only two generations. And then there is India...

Make absolutely no mistake about it. The planet was never designed to accommodate six billion human beings, much less the *ten* billion predicted to be here a mere forty years hence. If we are to be about turning power relations around between people, and between groups of people, we must also be about turning around the relationship between people and the rest of the natural order. If we don't, we'll die out as a species, just like any other species that irrevocably overshoots its habitat. The sheer numbers of humans on this planet needs to come down to about a quarter of what they are today, or maybe less, and the plain fact is that the bulk of these numbers are in the Third World. So, I'll say this clearly: not only must the birth rate in the Third World come down, but the population levels of Asia, Latin America, and Africa *must* be reduced over the next few generations. The numbers must start to come down dramatically, beginning right now.

Of course, there's another dimension to the population issue, one which is in some ways even more important, and I want to get into it in a minute. But first I have to say something else. This is that I don't want a bunch of Third Worlders jumping up in my face screaming

that I'm advocating "genocide." Get *off* that bullshit. It's genocide when some centralized state, or some colonizing power, imposes sterilization or abortion on target groups. It's not genocide at all when we recognize that *we* have a problem, and take the logical steps *ourselves* to solve them. Voluntary sterilization is not a part of genocide. Voluntary abortion is not a part of genocide. And, most important, educating ourselves and our respective peoples to bring our birth rates under control through conscious resort to birth control measures is not a part of genocide. What it *is*, is part of taking responsibility for ourselves again, of taking responsibility for our destiny and our children's destiny. It's about rooting the ghost of the Vatican out of our collective psyches, and the ghosts of Adam Smith and Karl Marx. It's about getting back in touch with our *own* ways, our *own* traditions, our *own* knowledge, and it's long past time we got out of our own way in this respect. We've got an awful lot to unlearn, and an awful lot to relearn, not much time in which we can afford the luxury of avoidance, and we need to get on with it.

The other aspect of population I wanted to take up is that there's another way of counting. One way, the way I just did it, and the one it's conventionally done, is to simply point to the number of bodies, or "people units." That's valid enough as far as it goes, so we have to look at it and act upon what we see, but it doesn't really go far enough. This brings up the second method, which is to count by differential rates of resource consumption – that is to say, the proportional degree of environmental impact per individual – and to extrapolate that into people units. Using this method, which is actually more accurate in ecological terms, we arrive at conclusions that are a little different from the usual notion that the most overpopulated regions on earth are in the Third World. The average resident of the United States, for example, consumes about thirty times the resources of the average Ugandan or Laotian. Since a lot of poor folk reside in the U. S., this translates into the average yuppie consuming about seventy times the resources of an average Third Worlder.

Every yuppie born has the same impact on the environment as another seventy Chinese. Lay *that* one on the next Polo-clad geek who approaches you with a baby stroller and an outraged look, demanding that you to put your cigarette out, eh? Tell 'em you'll snuff the smoke when they snuff the kid and not a moment before. Better yet, tell 'em they need to get busy snuffing *themselves*, along with the kid, and do the planet a *real* favor. Just "kidding" (heh-heh).

Returning to the topic at hand, you have to multiply the U.S. population by a factor of thirty – a noticeably higher ratio than either Western Europe or Japan – in order to figure out how many Third Worlders it would take to have the same environmental impact. I make that 7.5 *billion* U.S. people units. I think I can thus safely say the most overpopulated portion of the globe is the United States. Either the consumption rates really have to be cut in this country, most especially in the more privileged social sectors, or the number of people must be drastically reduced, or both. I advocate both. How much? That's a bit subjective, but I'll tentatively accept the calculations of William Catton, a respected ecological demographer. He estimated that North America was thoroughly saturated with humans by 1840. So we need to get both population and consumption levels down to what they were in that year, or preferably a little earlier.

...The objective inherent to every aspect of this process should be, and can be, to let everyone down as gently as possible from the long and intoxicating high that has beset so much of the human species in its hallucination that it, and it alone, holds value and importance in the universe. In doing so, and I believe *only* in doing so, can we fulfill our obligation to bequeath our grandchildren, and our grandchildren's grandchildren, a world which is fit (or even possible) to live in.

...In closing, I would like to turn again to the critics, the skeptics, those who will decry what has been said here as being "unrealistic," or even "crazy." On the former score, my reply is that as long as we define realism, or reality itself, in conventional terms, the terms imposed by the order of understanding in which we now live, we will be locked forever into the trajectory in which we presently find ourselves. We will never break free, because any order, any structure, defines reality only in terms of itself. Consequently, allow me to echo the sentiments expressed in the French student revolt of 1968: "Be realistic; demand the impossible!" If you read through a volume of American Indian oratory, and there are several available, you'll find that native people have been saying the same thing all along.

As to my being crazy, I'd like to say, "Thanks for the compliment." Again, I follow my elders and my ancestors – and R. D. Laing, for that matter – in believing that when confronted with a society as obviously insane as this one, the only sane posture one can adopt is what that society would automatically designate as crazy. I mean, it wasn't *Indians* who turned birthing into a religious fetish while butchering a couple hundred million people with weapons of mass destruction and systematically starving another billion or so to death. Indians never had a Grand Inquisition, and we never came up with a plumbing plan to reroute the water flow on the entire continent. Nor did we ever produce "leaders" of the caliber of Ronald Reagan, Madeline Albright, and Pat Buchanan. Hell, we never even figured out that turning prison construction into a major growth industry was an indication of social progress and enlightenment. Maybe we were never so much crazy as we were congenitally retarded.

Whatever the reason, and you'll excuse me for suspecting it might be something other than craziness or retardation, I'm indescribably thankful that our cultures turned out to be so different, no matter how much abuse and sacrifice it's entailed. I'm proud to stand inside the heritage of native struggle. I'm proud to say I am an unreconstructable indigenist. For me, there's no other reasonable or realistic way to look at the world. And I invite anyone who shares that viewpoint to come aboard, regardless of your race, creed, or national origin.

Maybe Chief Seattle said it best back in 1854:

"Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the white man whose god walked with him and talked with him as friend with friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see."

Its Twisted Soul

Contesting the Morality of Civilization

“mo·ral·i·ty

1a : a doctrine or system of moral conduct

b plural : particular moral principles or rules of conduct

2 : conformity to ideals of right human conduct.”

– Merriam-Webster Dictionary

“We talk about values or morality, in the deep sense of the term, at the moment that the sacred character of human experience becomes problematic, and, when compelled by our social structure, we segregate values from the general flow of our experience. As soon as we become capable of analyzing values they have become – in that other sense of the term – commodities, detached from ourselves, objects for the social scientist... Our pathology, then, consists in our dedication to abstractions...”

– Stanley Diamond

“Desperation is the raw material of drastic change. Only those who can leave behind everything they have ever believed in can hope to escape.”

– William S. Burroughs

Preface

Because of the inherently abstract nature of morality, challenging its assumptions, foundations or existence while maintaining a foot in tangible reality is not an easy thing to do. Symbolic culture tends to demand that you play it at its own game. To mount a real challenge, then, we must find ways to critique without actually resorting to critique, as the way through the maze of confusion, catastrophe and conditioning is not endless pondering or pontification. It's anything *but* that. So this is not intended as critique, analysis, or sermon. It's intended as an act of sedition; a small fragment of a scrawled map that may or may not point to a possible route of escape from the belly of the beast.

Identifying a Point of Entry

I think if we were to poll every single member of this culture with the question “What action constitutes the most clear violation of conventional morality?” an answer that would be very close to the top of the list would be infanticide: the killing of infants. I'm basing this guess on murder being popularly seen as the most heinous crime one can

commit against individuals, especially innocent individuals, and infants being popularly seen, for obvious reasons, as perfect innocents. Both of these premises – of murdering innocents being a heinous crime, and infants being a clear example of innocents – are hard to argue with.

And indeed, I have no intention of doing so.

But I do have two polar examples of this particular moral code being routinely violated, both inside and outside this culture, and I think examination of these examples may at least expose the primary lies of civilized morality: that it is unshakeable and can never serve anything but 'good', and that there is no other way to live but within its boundaries. Perhaps, if we're persistent, we may even emerge on the other side with an idea of how we ourselves might live outside its boundaries.

The Nazis and Infanticide

Before the 'Final Solution' was implemented, the Nazis were exterminating elements of their own population in "euthanasia" programs of various shades. (The word "euthanasia" must appear in quotation marks as it was used by the Nazis as nothing more than camouflage for mass-murder). The first of these was an unofficial but State-implemented program of murdering newborn infants and young children (and later disabled adults) who were judged to be, in Nazi terms, "life unworthy of life". Robert Jay Lifton, in his astonishing book *The Nazi Doctors*, describes the programs' beginning and subsequent functioning thusly:

"...the order to implement the biomedical vision came from the political leadership (in this case Hitler himself); the order was conveyed to a leading doctor in the regime who combined with high-ranking administrators to organize a structure for the project; and prominent academic administrative doctors sympathetic to the regime were called in to maintain and administer this medicalized structure... It was decided that the program was to be secretly run from the Chancellery...and for that purpose an organization was created: the Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Diseases... [A] strictly confidential directive [issued by the committee] stated that, "for the clarification of scientific questions in the field of congenital malformation and mental retardation, the earliest possible registration" was required of all children under three years of age in whom any of the following "serious hereditary diseases" were "suspected": idiocy and mongolism (especially when associated with blindness and deafness); microcephaly; hydrocephaly; malformations of all kinds, especially of limbs, head, and spinal column; and paralysis, including spastic conditions... Midwives were required to make these reports at the time of birth... and doctors themselves were to report all such children up to the age of three."

The reports regarding the children with these "serious hereditary diseases" were then forwarded to and reviewed by a panel of "experts", who would not examine the children themselves, or even read the children's medical records, but make their life or death decision based entirely on the report, which was in actuality nothing more than a brief questionnaire filled out by the midwife and/or doctor. Lifton again:

"If an expert decided upon "treatment" - meaning the killing of the child - he put a plus sign (+) in the left column. If he decided against killing the child, he put a minus sign (-)

in the middle column. If he thought a definite decision should not yet be made, he wrote in the right-hand column the phrase "temporary postponement" or the word "observation"... Where a decision for or against killing was not unanimous...these children...were sent for further observation to the same children's units where the killing was done... These centers were grandly referred to as "Reich Committee Institutions," "Children's Specialty Institutions (or Departments)," or even "Therapeutic Convalescent Institutions." Actually no such separate institutions existed. The children marked for death were usually dispersed among ordinary pediatric patients; some were kept in separate wards of their own."

As for the actual killing, most children were given increased doses of luminal over a period of several days, until they fell into a coma and died. But as we are looking at morality here, and specifically at violations of its sanctity, a look at the worst may be illuminating. This is again taken from Lifton, here quoting a visitor to a Reich Committee Institution in 1939, who is recalling the comments and actions of the institutions' director, Dr Hermann Pfannmüller:

" "I remember the gist of the following general remarks by Pfannmüller: These creatures (he meant the children) naturally represent for me as a National Socialist only a burden for the healthy body of our *Volk* [a Nazi term denoting a people or nation as an embodiment of racial-cultural substance]. We do not kill...with poison, injections, etc... No, our method is much simpler and more natural, as you see. With these words, he pulled...a child from its little bed. While he then exhibited the child like a dead rabbit, he asserted with a knowing expression and a cynical grin: For this one it will take two to three more days. The picture of this fat, grinning man, in his fleshy hand the whimpering skeleton, surrounded by other starving children, is still vivid in my mind. The murderer explained further then, that sudden withdrawal of food was not employed, rather gradual decrease of the rations... Pfannmüller...did not hide the fact that among the children to be murdered ...were also children who were not mentally ill, namely children of Jewish parents." "

We can see very clearly the similarities between the murderous Nazi regime and our current political, capitalist and industrial structures. Indeed, if we look closely we can even see the ghost of Dr Pfannmüller, still grinning like a demon and rubbing his hands together with glee, standing behind our present-day rulers as they rant endlessly about the righteousness of mass-murder and invasion, and say of half a million dead Iraqi children, for instance, "we think the price is worth it." But the present manifestation of industrial fascism is not my second example – I do not think it would be sufficiently different from the first to even constitute a second example. Instead, I want to look outside this culture. In fact, to before the prison walls of morality as we understand it were even erected.

Primal Infanticide and 'Social Acceptability'

Many anthropological and historical studies have asserted that primal cultures have practiced infanticide as a method of controlling population growth. To quote from Clive Ponting's excellent *A Green History of the World*:

"All gathering and hunting groups, both contemporary and historical, seem to have tried to control their numbers so as not to overtax the resources of their ecosystem. This was

achieved through a number of accepted social customs. The most widespread was infanticide involving the selected killing of certain categories such as twins, the handicapped and a proportion of female offspring. (Studies in the 1930s showed that Inuit groups killed about 40 per cent of their female children.)”

It is important to acknowledge here that infanticide is known to have become much more prevalent among domesticated – or, to be more specific, sedentary – peoples than it was among non-sedentary (that is, nomadic) peoples. Indeed, it is believed to have been (and continue to be) comparatively rare among nomadic peoples. This makes sense if we give thought to the mounting pressures that come with sedentary life, as population rises and an increasing amount of hours in the day must be dedicated to working for (ie. cultivating) food – increasingly desperate measures are called for in order not to exceed the carrying capacity of the landbase. That said, the wild/domesticated dichotomy is a false one here – there is no clear line between the two, historically or anthropologically, and infanticide is known to have occurred to some extent amongst *all* nomadic gatherer-hunter peoples, just with less frequency than among sedentary peoples. The point, of course, is not to tally how often infanticide has occurred among primitive peoples (whether sedentary/domesticated or nomadic/wild or somewhere in between), but to make clear that primitive peoples were and are psychologically and emotionally capable of making such an extremely difficult and harsh decision as to commit infanticide, and not as an act of cruelty or power, but as an act of what they see to be *absolute necessity*.

In his latest work, *Collapse*, environmental scientist and historian Jared Diamond laments the population explosion of New Guinea, and mentions in passing – having already well-documented the catastrophic consequences of overpopulation – that “population control by infanticide is no longer socially acceptable as a solution.” With this short passage Diamond bypasses what *should* be one of the central tenets of his book: overpopulation always leads to ecological and social disaster (and eventually collapse), and there is a reciprocal relationship between the escalating disaster of industrial society and that industrial ways of thought have deemed ancient ways of being “no longer socially acceptable”.

Infanticide, as we know, is “no longer socially acceptable” (a euphemism for ‘immoral’), yet overpopulation leading to certain, or perhaps we should say *continuous*, ecological and social catastrophe is not only perfectly ‘socially acceptable’, but has been our way of life for 10,000 years. (That infanticide is by no means – and to our knowledge has never been – the only method of population control does not lessen this point).

Here we reach the very root of the problem with morality: *it is a product and reinforcement of our separation from nature*. Thus it can only ever serve the continued degradation of the natural order, of life itself.

Nazi Morality Never Died (it just got a facelift)

The Nazi’s, then, do not constitute the exception that proves the rule of morality. Every one of their actions was justified by the morality *they constructed*. In fact every one of their actions was *demand*ed by the morality they constructed. To return to the example of the “euthanasia” program that was nothing more than the disguised assembly-line mass-murder of infants, children and disabled adults, the Nazi’s were simply enacting their logic of “life unworthy of life”. This term was coined in 1920 by

two distinguished German professors, Alfred Hoche and Karl Binding, who wrote a philosophical treatise entitled *The Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life*, emphasizing the supposed *healing* quality of such destruction (that's "healing" for the broader social body, not healing for the unfortunate lives "unworthy of life", obviously). This work was merely a brick in the elaborately constructed wall of Nazi morality.

We consider the Nazi's extreme not because of the endless piles of corpses they produced – cold, calculated mass-murder is an everyday occurrence in this culture – but because they were so crass and unabashed with their insane justifications for such massive bloodshed, and because nowadays we can produce the mountains of corpses so much more quietly and efficiently.

But the corpses are still piling up.

And the justifications are still insane.

The mechanical heart of civilization hasn't missed a beat, and morality, its twisted soul, not only oils the gears by providing purpose and justification for the slaughter of the natural world and its inhabitants, but it tries to make us all feel good about it, too.

Asking the Right Questions, Finding Some Answers

But what of the infants born into primitive communities who chose to limit their population through infanticide? Were they not just as innocent as the victims of the Nazi's?

Certainly they were, but that is not the right question.

The problem is not death. Death is a crucial part of the natural cycle. All of these people we are discussing were sure to die, just as I am sure to die, and just as you are sure to die. There is no sense in passing moral judgement on death. It won't listen to you. Death just *is*.

So we must look for meaning elsewhere: in the stated purpose of the killers. Why did they kill?

The Nazi's killed for the "purity" of their "*Volk*" – because they saw certain others as a threat to their future generations. But this threat was not real. It was imagined. And in fact their "*Volk*" did not exist either – it was also imagined. They created elaborate moral and political mythologies to justify their vicious thirst for conquest.

Further, the Nazi's killed in numerous cruel and unnecessarily painful ways. They did not respect their victims, or honour them in death. Infants were poisoned or starved to death in secret, and their families lied to about the cause of death. Many, many others, of all ages, were vilified, enslaved and tortured, forced or tricked into rooms they believed to be showers, gassed, and their bodies disposed of secretly so as to avoid any later reckoning. Many were made to lie down in ditches, on top of piles of corpses, where they were shot before being set on fire, with human fat poured on them so they would burn faster. Some were not shot before being set on fire.

This was all for the Nazi's imagined "purity" of (and blood-soaked *lebensraum* for) their imagined "*Volk*." It was all for a set of abstract ideas.

It was all for nothing.

(Again, the commonalities between the Third Reich and the present face of industrial civilization are so apparent as to make any comparison redundant).

The motivations for infanticide among primal societies can come from a number of different sources. There is no situation or circumstance that is always applicable and there is more at play than we are likely to be aware of, for obvious reasons. But we can say with some certainty that the purpose of the deaths was far more often than not to keep their population at a sustainable level.

What does that really mean?

It means that these people were prepared to kill their own offspring – and sometimes did so – in order to maintain their way of life and the relationship they had with their landbase.

It means that what came first – what was to be defended at all costs – was not an abstract idea of ‘morality’, or some maniacal fantasy of ethnic or cultural purity. It was what nourished and provided in every way. It was the earth.

Primal peoples did, and do, have social codes and customs. You could argue that these codes and customs could perhaps be said to constitute a certain kind of morality, but if so it is a morality that differs so vastly from civilized morality as to stand in diametrical opposition to it. To identify a ‘primal morality’, then, is to render the term ‘morality’ meaningless.

Civilized morality is a mediated doctrine of pious rules to be bent or broken only by those at the top of the social hierarchy (or those who serve them directly). It serves only the abstract and invented, the powerful and pompous, and, despite its foundation of supposed authority and incorruptibility, can be easily recast to justify and provoke the very atrocities it claims to oppose, as we have seen, as we see every day in this culture. What stands in morality’s stead in primal societies makes no claims to virtue, serves no gods or masters, and lives only in the hearts and minds of those who do not need to prostrate themselves before rule-books or philosophise endlessly about what is right:

If it is right for the earth, our mother, it is right.

If the humyn race – and perhaps the planet itself – is going to survive this cancer called civilization, we must find our way back to this place of certainty and love, at any cost. Everything depends upon this.



Letters

A cross-section of correspondence received since last issue.

Responses follow in italics where available/appropriate. Personal information has been edited to protect the innocent and guilty alike.

X X X

"The most revolutionary thing to do is to affirm [...] that billions of people can in the here and now deliberately smash the system and construct new ways of living... but then I am in a bad mood"

31st August, 2004

Hi Mate, got your zine, put it in my bag, then my bag got stolen. It looked interesting though i must say that faced with the choice of being a slave or ashes i want a third option, and if that means i must be a slave for one second longer to have the possibility of that option i choose slavery.

I also think D Jensen is incoherent pop-philosophy with poor analysis and no rigor. Valerie Solanas only gets so much time devoted to her as a way of ridiculing feminism and to take up cultural attention that should be spent on some of her contemporaries (who were just as radical and actually did some cool shit). Who even remembers the Red Stockings etc?

Also civilisation is a poor analytical tool as it prevents us seen the specific nature of changes in capital instead falling into some lame civilisation/ wild binary. Capital in 2004 shares very little with Assyria in 1400BC and possibly less with the Olmecs. It is a nice rhetorical device, but poor in practice. Also any collapsist shit is just that: shit.

The most revolutionary thing to do is to affirm the possibility and desirability of revolution, that billions of people can in the here and now deliberately smash the system and construct new ways of living. Anything else is reactionary. The core of a revolutionary critique is a focus on our power, our scream our revolt as a constant force resisting oppression – that is what "drives" history. Something idiotic primitivism forgets.

but then i am in a bad mood.

Cheers,
D----

1st September, 2004

D---

Thanks for the feedback. Clearly you are in a bad mood. Sorry to hear about your bag – that's awful. I can't send you a replacement zine right now, as I've only got a couple with me here in E-----. I'll do a second print run right before the Belladonna DIY festival – grab one off

me there if you want one. In response to your points:

The rhetoric at the start of the zine is just that: rhetoric. I was hardly making a statement of fact that it's an either/or choice between being ashes or being a slave – I was simply trying to say that any kind of slave rebellion that stands a chance of success would need to be comprised of people who were willing to put their lives on the line – literally, as in risking death, or at least lengthy imprisonment, which is at least comparable. It seems to me that the 'third option' you're looking for is winning.

I'm not really suprised that you weren't into the Derrick Jensen stuff – although criticizing him of incoherence does surprise me. His clarity and unwillingness to muddy discussions with abstracts and intellectualism is one of the things that really appeals to me about his work.

Valerie Solanas gets a passing mention at the start of one of the articles, and it's not even a mention that passes opinion on her or her politics. The SCUM Manifesto is listed in the bibliography precisely because it did 'inspire' a conversation that was somewhat relayed in the zine; but the content is not discussed. To be blunt, for all you (or anybody else reading the zine) know, the discussion mentioned concluded that her ideas were indeed unworkable/undesirable – no opinion one way or the other is indicated. I really wouldn't know about your theory that she's focussed on to detract more warranted attention from her contemporaries – I've only ever seen/heard her mentioned by J---, you, Inga Muscio in 'Cunt' (whose point about Solanas' analysis being vilified purely because her pronouns weren't the same way around as Aristotle's is certainly valid) and..... nope, that's it. There's a movie I haven't seen that could well fit into your theory, I wouldn't know.

As for a definition of civilization, I'm going to quote your old mate Derrick Jensen: "I would define civilization...as a culture – that is, a complex of stories, institutions, and artifacts – that both leads to and emerges from the growth of cities (civilization, see civil: from civis, meaning citizen, from latin civitatis, meaning state or city), with cities being defined – so as to distinguish them from camps, villages and so on – as people living more or less permanently in one place in densities high enough to require the routine importation of foods and other necessities of life... The story of any civilization is the story of the rise of cities, which means it is the story of the funneling of resources toward these cities (in order to sustain them and cause them to grow), which means it is the story of an increasing region of unsustainability surrounded by an increasingly exploited countryside."

I'm not sure that I care about analyzing "the specific nature of changes in capital" – seems like concentrating on drawing diagrams of an engine being fine-tuned when the whole car needs to be dismantled. I agree that there's ostensibly little in common between now and ancient civilizations, but I think what is in common is what's important: a fucked-up, unsustainable, utilitarian view of the earth/land base, which enables hierarchy, patriarchy, and no end of ecological destruction. Or, as Lewis Mumford has it in his epic 'Myth of the Machine': "[Civilization's] chief features, constant in varying proportions throughout history, are the centralization of political power, the seperation of classes, the lifetime division of labor, the mechanization of production, the magnification of military power, the economic exploitation of the weak, and the universal introduction of slavery and forced labor for both industrial and military purposes."

My experience with the term 'collapsist' leads me to believe that it refers to advocating a strategy of 'waiting for civilization to collapse', rather than trying to bring about collapse ourselves – quite the opposite of what I was aiming for with the zine. Personally, I don't think collapse is an event, but a process – and I do think industrial society is in some stage of that

process. To me, that means a much increased need for total autonomy and decisive action, in order to wrench our lives from the maw of domination and domestication before it's too late. In any case, whether you disagreed with something or simply misunderstood it (or misremembered it, considering you must have written your criticisms without a copy of the zine to hand), 'shit' is a pretty strong word to use to a friend about their first ever solo zine.

I totally agree with your sentiment about our power. I really did try to make the zine as empowering as I could for people reading it (and for myself putting it together). The other two people who've so far given me feedback did seem to get this out of the zine. Possibly the focus on feminist direct action/self-defense assured this, as they were both womyn.

We both know that you can out-analyze (and out-argue) me, D---. How about instead you keep me on my toes by continuing to contribute to future issues of the zine?

Thanks again for the feedback.

Struggle with/and/for Love,

2nd September, 2004

Hi ----

...I am not arguing for an idea that the totality of civilisation can be reformed rather than there is a totally different set of social relationships that define capitalism to, say, feudalism (with some commonalities). The structures of class, power and patriarchy operate in almost totally different ways. The antagonism between peasant and feudal lord, the nature of the city (as a space of freedom for those escaping the tyranny of ossified rural relationships- esp. women), the relationships to work - largely small-scale crafts with sizable personal autonomy, are all totally different. So too are the paths of rebellion of exodus and insurrection deeply different. We can not try for, example, to simply rampage the castle, destroy the monastery and form peasant communes, which many people across Europe did. We need a specific analysis of 'now', what paths are open to us.

As for what is common in civilisation, its relationship to land /earth, what would we say about say the Celts, of the traces of Mayan civilisation in the Zapatistas, or in fact any peasant movement. They are civilised: settled populations, horticulture/some agriculture, even some social stratification and hierarchy. Yet they also contain deeply libertarian practices, egalitarianism and an ecology and sustainable relationship with the ecology they exist in.

For most of civilisations histories, how the land/earth is viewed is vastly varied and inconsistent. Science as we understand it is very new, a mainly capitalist development. Other civilisation have maintained mystical, sometimes matriarchal, spiritual, romanticised, just generally different understandings

It makes me wonder if the term civilisation is such an ahistorical generalisation if it has any worth as a critical category. Its a nice piece of rhetoric, David Watson uses it well, but the more i see it applied the more I feel it is a chain on thought. I'll still play with it, use it in qualified ways (industrial civilisation or the civilisation of the commodity etc) but beyond that.....

cheers, love D---

PS I think the latest issue of Fifth Estate, the summer 2004 one – there may be a new issue just released – called Reconsidering Primitivism is surprisingly excellent. It maintains who was/is good about anarcho-primitivism before it became such a tedious ideology. The essential elements of a green anarchic neo-luddite vision remain vital and free, opposition to the way of life enforce by the despotism of capital, investigations of the past and present moments and communities of resistance, the constant possibilities of liberated relationships, of ecological harmony, of human happiness. I

want to partake in creating an critical theory and practice that can live up to this task: nuanced, intelligent, human. I know it is strange to stress the human in green circles: we are meant to cheer for "nature" the "bear" etc. But the essential kernel of anarchy is the "human", the belief that we can life differently, that it is just as human to be free, more so in fact, than it is to be chained.

X X X

“What scares me is the idea that we will destroy ourselves without having learnt just how wrong we’ve been...”

14th September 2004

Dear ----,

...do you really think the planet is overpopulated? (I’m picking up on a line in your piece about how we’ve ‘overshot the carrying capacity’ of the earth). I’ve never been entirely convinced by this argument – I thought the problem was more to do with distribution (of population, of food and crops, of resources) than overpopulation. Over-consumption, sure, I think that’s a given.

In terms of the idea of ‘civilisation’, I think you’re right in saying that it’s an inherently ‘civilised’ thing to talk/doubt of the concept in the first place. This is the theory-reading university student in me, which is not necessarily a great or particularly ‘truthful’ position to be speaking from, but I don’t think we can ‘get out’ of civilisation. Structuralist theory 101 would be that as soon as you have language, you have separation (of the self from the world in our ability to identify/name things) – separation means that all of our understanding is constructed, by language. ‘Nature’ as we conceive it is a construct, because we can’t think of it without the mediation of language. Therefore everything (for us) is culture – ‘civilisation’ to a greater or lesser degree. It’s a theory that has many flaws (for a start, it assumes that ‘language’ is a one-way street between us and everything else in the world, without any account of non-human languages), but I would agree with the idea that in the end we are always separated to some degree – because language constructs us – from everything else. You know, I can’t ‘be’ the tree, I can’t ‘merge’ with my environment, however much I’d like to. I can’t get beyond or before language, but I suppose my qualification to the theory would be: if that’s the case, I should probably talk less and listen more to other forms of language then.

When I was reading a lot of stuff on the idea of apocalypse earlier in the year, I read an interview with the paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, and his ideas were really interesting...if I remember correctly, his basic argument was okay, we’re destroying the planet and it’s bad but rest assured, the planet is going to destroy us first. We’ll probably wipe out humanity, but it’s arrogant of us to think that the rise and fall of the planet coincides with the rise and fall of human beings. We’ve only been here for a blip on the planets time-line, and that’s all we ever will be. The planet will survive without us, because that is ‘normality’ – the time of humanity is an anomaly in the life of Earth.

It sounds incredibly nihilistic, which I suppose it is from a human perspective (the only perspective we have) – and I don’t think (nor do I think he meant) that this mitigates our responsibility for the destruction we have caused. Of course we have to fight it, but if the damage is irreversible and we destroy ourselves because of it, perhaps it’s a fucking good thing for the long term health of the planet. What scares me is the idea that we will destroy ourselves without having learnt just how wrong we’ve been, that we’ll go down dragging as much of the planet with us as we can grab hold of, stubbornly blind to the fact that we are the ones at fault.

...much love,

A----

Late September 2004

Dear A----,

"The consensus assumption of civilization is that an exponentially expanding human population with exponentially expanding consumption of material resources can continue, based on dwindling resources and a dying ecosystem. This is simply absurd. Nonetheless, civilization continues on with no memory of its history and no vision of its future." – William H. Koetke, *'The Final Empire: The Collapse of Civilization and the Seed of the Future'*.

...Yes, I do believe that the planet is overpopulated. Very much so. Clearly at some point I have come to consider overpopulation a fact, rather than an opinion, or else I would have qualified the statements in the 'Against Civilization' piece in my zine. My bad. The two authors that I've read recently that address issues of (over)population specifically are Derrick Jensen – in the book he's about to finish writing, excerpted in the zine [N.B the first volume of this book, entitled 'Endgame: The Collapse of Civilization and the Rebirth of Community', is scheduled to be published around the same time as this zine you're reading right now] – and Ward Churchill, in an essay of his called 'I am Indigenist', which appears in several of his books, the most recent version appears in his reader 'Acts of Rebellion', I think [see the 'Population and Environment' excerpt earlier in this issue]. Both Derrick and Ward Churchill are very clear and convincing on the issue of serious overpopulation. They both cite a book called 'Overshoot: the Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change', by William R. Catton, Jr – which appears to be a very well-respected interrogation of the ecological issues surrounding overpopulation. Unfortunately, I'm yet to locate a copy of this book in Australia.

I am most certainly not any kind of authority on overpopulation, but, it does seem clear to me that the only way 6 billion people are able to (dysfunctionally) function on this planet right now is with the profoundly unsustainable practices of industrial agriculture. You're certainly right that there is a problem with distribution -- there is enough food to 'feed the world', as they say – the capitalists just don't see any profit in it. But my contention is that there shouldn't be enough food to feed six billion people, that the only way we're producing that much food is with an industrialized agriculture system that is completely reliant on increasingly scarce fossil fuels ('Peak Oil', anyone?), and that, as a matter of course, erodes and degrades our soil, pollutes and wastes our terrifyingly scarce drinking water, and in general is helping to rapidly bring our planet to a state of devastating ecological collapse. You'll notice that in that last sentence I referred to 'our' soil, 'our' drinking water, and 'our' planet – in fact one of the reasons I feel so strongly about this is that I don't believe that any of those things are in fact 'ours'. Even if there was a way to feed six billion of us sustainably (ie. without being on a slippery slope, of whatever gradation, to certain doom), I would still oppose that state of affairs, because I do not believe that this earth is ours to overrun. But that is just my opinion, so I won't argue it like it's a cold, hard fact. It's just how I feel.

...But anyway, yes, I do consider it a fact that the planet cannot sustain anything like the numbers of people we have right now, and that's a scary thought in conjunction with something else I consider a fact – that we don't have time to bring our numbers down "naturally", even if by some miracle our entire culture became convinced overnight of its catastrophic realities. I put the word "naturally" in inverted commas because, from the earth's point of view, there is nothing unnatural about a large scale die-off, of course (although the way we may be about to bring it about certainly is). As you pointed out, it's extremely arrogant to

think that the rise and fall of the planet coincides with the rise and fall of humyn beings – on the earth's time-line, we're just a blip.

Following on from this, I feel the need to point out that, just as humyn beings are 'a blip' on the time-line of the planet, civilized humyn beings – the very humyn beings that have caused the near-annihilation of the biosphere – are just a blip on the time-line of the humyn race: Chellis Glendinning's conceptualization (in 'My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery From Western Civilization') of this is that if human existence (and it should be noted that she estimates this conservatively at 1 million years) is a hundred-foot basketball court, we (industrially civilized humyns) represent the last one fifth of an inch of the entire court.

So I think it's of course relevant to talk in terms of our kind being in danger of taking the whole planet with us when we go, but we need to be clear that "our kind" and "we" is not the humyn race, but our culture specifically. Any talk of our destructive "nature" that doesn't make that distinction is not only perpetuating the arrogant civilized mindset you mentioned, but is also nihilistically ignoring the fact that we – that is, humyn beings – are perfectly capable of living in harmony with the earth, and in fact have done so for the vast majority of our existence. Primal cultures that have somehow so far managed to avoid or resist extinction at the hands of civilization are almost always referred to with contempt and condescension in this culture, because they're seen as a freakish anomaly. The irony is that it's us – industrialized, civilized humyns – and our pathological way of (anti) life that is the freakish anomaly. And, ultimately, it will be us that is 'just a blip'.

In response to your thoughts on language and inherent separation, I think the 'we' you're using is all-important again. You're talking about the civilized mindset, not the humyn mindset, right? There are some anti-civilization anarchists who believe that 'symbolic culture' (including language) does indeed force an inherent separation 'of the self from the world', as you put it – see, for instance, John Zerzan's 'Elements of Refusal'. But I'm still not sure to what degree I feel this way myself. I think something that's key is something you mentioned – it's something Derrick Jensen writes about a lot: learning to really listen, and not just to each other. Although I have painfully little contact with the natural world in my current life, I am very much in love with the idea that the earth, the land, will tell us what we need to do, if only we would listen. In accordance with this, my conclusion is that language – or symbolic representation as a whole – is only a problem to the extent that it prevents us listening. To what extent that is the case, I do not yet know.

For total liberation, with love,

X X X

“...the way we are trying to live our lives gives us great joy.”

Summer 2004/2005

Hey ----,

...We live on forty acres of land that is roughly half cleared and half bush. We border state forest and that in turn borders National Park. Our daughter (11 years old) and son (almost 7) don't go to school. Instead they simply live and love life.

We are working towards sustainability as far as our food goes. Last year we tried simply scattering seed Fukuoka style but found that his methods were not workable with our clay soil and

cold climate and we're currently putting in more conventional garden beds. We eat a lot of salads primarily made with wild greens. I have now started hunting to provide meat. And I'll have to take up fishing as well. There is so much to learn that it is overwhelming at times when I come from a completely suburban upbringing and aren't in the least bit a handyman.

We have free-range chickens for eggs and a couple of free ranging milking goats. I know it is domestication, which is something that I ideally would have liked to avoid, but I also need to be realistic in what we can achieve. The goats have a lot to teach us.

The State Forest all around us and all over the state is being raped, poisoned and turned into plantation monoculture. The rumble of the log trucks as they pass by our place is an ever-present reminder of the ongoing ecocide. We've just been told that the recently logged coup behind us is going to be sprayed with roundup to kill every wild plant so they can plant their single species seedlings. Once they've planted the seedlings they'll be spraying some potent chemical that prevents any seed from germinating for six months. The tears are welling up having just written this paragraph.

I really appreciate the quote you finished your letter with. A visiting friend recently remarked that they had never met a happier child than our son, and the way we are trying to live our lives gives us great joy. It's a difficult process overcoming thirty odd years of conditioning and we have a long way to go.

Enough for now. Love to you,

The four of us.

Winter 2005

Hey ----,

Gee I've been really busy of late. We ended up with a real shortage of water after the autumn rains that usually come didn't arrive. The main tank to the house was so low we had to restrict it to drinking water only. We have another smaller tank (but with more water in it) that wasn't in use so I had to come up to speed with a bit of plumbing so we could at least get a tap somewhere near our house. So all water is now carried into the house in buckets.

It's worked out really well because we've turned off our electric hot water forever. We decided that heating water on the wood stove when we need it is much more fun than simply turning on a tap. Similarly it has sped me up on my plans to replace our septic system with a composting toilet system. It's absurd how much water gets flushed. So the "composting toilet system" actually translates to shitting in buckets (covering it with sawdust) and then transferring it to the compost pile a couple of times a week when it is full. That's the plan anyway – I hope to implement it by Spring.

Other than that I've been busy chopping wood, sorting out our vegetable garden and other bits and pieces that have been cropping up. Our days are pretty full.

...I may have a go at trying to write something for *Arson*. In fact ever since I moved here (over two years ago) I've been intent on putting pen to paper but it just hasn't happened. I'm also conscious that writing about my unjust privilege could be interpreted for what it is – a product of the capitalist system. So we'll see what happens.

I saw pictures of the hailstorm up in Brisbane a month or so ago. The frequency of screwed up weather seems to be increasing at an incredible pace. Here we had an extremely dry summer and autumn. I was reading yesterday about all the plants and animals in Victoria that are starting to go into a false Spring now. It makes you wonder just how much longer is agriculture going to be viable – massive crop failures are surely just around the corner. Perhaps the earth is about to kill its cancer.

...I can relate to the debilitating pessimism you spoke of. It's something that visits from time to time despite the wonderful life I'm leading now. We're all living outside of our natural place and only after civilization has crumbled can we truly be free of it.

Love to you,

The four of us.

X X X

"...we can't just drop everything and fight."

5th February, 2005

Hey -----.

I picked up a copy of your zine the other week! ...

Ok, first of all I like it because of the way it sits next to similar stuff I've read.

Remember how you told me about Countdown to Putsch? Well, at the last Belladonna I bought their zine. A--- took particular interest in it but something I felt that it had that yours doesn't have, is a sense of urgency to the point of refusing to acknowledge that (healthy) humans have 80 years to live and that we have the right to take the time to choose just what is really urgent, in our minds, and how to help overcome it. There was one particular article which tore savagely into liberals...

"So what is the ideology of the activist left (and by that we mean the global justice, peace, media democracy, community organizing, financial populist and green movements)? Is the activist left just an inchoate "post-ideological" mass of do-gooders, pragmatists and puppeteers? No. The young troublemakers of today do have an ideology and it is as deeply felt and intellectually totalizing as any of the great belief systems of yore. The cadres who populate those endless meetings, who bang the drum, who lead the "training's" and paint the puppets, do indeed have a creed. They are activistists.

"That's right, activistists. This brave new ideology combines the political illiteracy of hypermediated American culture with all the moral zeal of a 19th-century temperance crusade. In this worldview, all roads lead to more activism and more activists. And the one who acts is righteous. The activistists seem to borrow their philosophy from the factory boss in a Heinrich Böll short story who greets his employees each morning with the exhortation "Let's have some action." To which the workers obediently reply: "Action will be taken!" "

What your zine does seem to advocate though, with all this in mind, is resolve to get violent. I think of my dad, who is one pissed off guy with the world (but never aggressive.) At the most frustrating times for him, he burrows into his Chomsky collection and returns very cynical (and informed) about everything. We watched 'The Incredibles' and he was CONVINCED it was propaganda (actually he managed to convince me it was propaganda). But he's not about to go take a torch to a Macca's, or tangle with the police, or steal anything (that would be against his conscience) because his highest priority, even with such an understanding of power, is to take care of his family, meaning raising the means (which he has done all by himself) by which we can get educated and be able to take our own time to choose to fight. This is great!!

Of course, people who resolve to not fight and just "go with the flow" and dismiss activists as "bleeding hearts" and "people looking for something to whinge about" are utterly shit and walk on a very delicate rope. Death comes to them suddenly because they don't expect a blemish in their lives (of working hard and being an "Aussie battler" or not.)

Anyway, through this example of my dad, my point is that we can't just drop everything

and fight. Maybe it could be argued that the only ones who could rightfully resist the cops were those 150 youth and their families and that help from someone like me (on a separate occasion) doing the same would help them but then again cops are there to protect families like mine in the first place. I refuse to shoulder that guilt.

Nita Crabb says, "we can discuss whether humans will change before, after or because of the crash. But I think most simply won't. But it only matters that the humans who survive change." Hang on...

1. most humans who survive won't change.
 2. To start properly over again, humans who survive must change.
- 1 defeats 2 !

In the same way you sell your zine for 3 dollars, Michael Moore sells The Corporation DVD (amongst honorable others) through corporations for thirty dollars, calling it 'a noose that corporations, by selling this product, hang themselves with'. It has similar destructive capabilities (in a positive way) as yours but my idea is that maybe when activist material hits the big time, corporations will be forced by the popularity of such products to change their ways. Sweatshops could become so frowned upon that big multinationals might be forced to hire expensive labor. That I can see happening soon.

...I really enjoyed 'The Politics of Sadness', 'The Night is a Monster' and 'FIGHT BACK', and the "we're in capitalist hell" billboard. This is just stuff I can save in my mind and use no matter what.

I'm one of many girls who probably wouldn't, of my own accord, be able to see that exercising pre-emptive mercy by not having the guts to forcefully disable an attacker, for the sake of human life would be no good. Because they don't see ME as human life.

...Hear from you soon I hope? Please take good care of yourself!

xxoooooxx L-----

21st February, 2005

hey L-----,

Wonderful to hear from you. Thank you so much for your thoughts on my zine! Here are my thoughts in return...

I take your point about the Countdown to Putsch thing about taking our time and deciding for ourselves what's important and urgent to us. At the same time, I think life is fucking precious, and so fucking short, that we're fools to take it for granted – I'm sure CtP would agree there. I also think that it's a mistake to think that we're in complete control and we can choose what needs to be worked on next according to what is most important to us as people. I think the ecological meltdown of the entire planet kind of negates that. An author I really love called Ward Churchill has an amazing essay called 'I am Indigenist', where he identifies struggles such as feminism, anti-homophobia, anti-racist, even anti-capitalism as secondary to indigenous land rights. His reasoning is that if we had a queer, feminist, anti-capitalist etc revolution today, our post-capitalist, post-patriarchy etc utopia WOULD STILL BE ON STOLEN LAND, just as our fucked sexist capitalist society was (is). He also argues that indigenous cultures (in his discussion, specifically American Indian nations) have an infinitely healthier take on things like race and gender and sexual preference, etc – so he's not saying that these struggles should be abandoned, at all, he's saying that these struggles are already part of a whole that requires our attention. I do agree with these aspects of his 'Indigenist' perspective, and I think they apply just as well to the earth liberation/environmental struggle:

how exactly are we going to have our groovy post-capitalism/ patriarchy/ homophobia/racism utopian commune world ON A DEAD PLANET? So while I do agree that we have to prioritize our actions according to what we as people are passionate about – of course, or else how are we going to be effective? – I also think that we have to be a little bit realistic about the fact that our enemies are murdering the planet..

Just as I think we have to get realistic about the fact that our enemies are not going to back down or change their ways without being forced to, and that we can't force them to do anything if we just 'protest' in the ways that they themselves allow us to! And I think that we have to get realistic about the fact that 'violence' is not just something that we 'protestors' do to Macdonald's windows, or occasionally cops at a very rowdy protest, or even that just cops do to us: this entire society is violent. I mean, Jesus, we're walking around on blood-soaked stolen land, driving cars that are pushing the biosphere yet closer to oblivion with every inch they carry us to our jobs that help prop up the economy that keeps the people whose land we stole poor, desperate and dying. I do not think that, in this situation, it is merely rhetoric to state that our everyday 'normal' lives are violent to their core – that our entire culture is violent to its core – and that we are complicit in this violence when we allow it to continue without serious challenge. So while your dad may not ever tangle with the cops or burn down cappo scumfuck buildings, his life is violent. So is yours. And mine. I'm typing this on a computer made of toxic plastics, the hard-drive of which would have given the women in Thailand who made it cancer, not to mention kept them working in a sweatshop... That's violent. In short, I totally agree with Derrick Jensen's analysis of violence in the last excerpt in the section of his in my zine.

But, to be clear, I'm not at all saying that because violence is already everywhere we should all take to the streets and initiate a bloodbath. Of course not. Violent struggle is necessary, but it's not for everyone. As Derrick also says (but I'm not sure if this is in the zine), "We need it all". We need people growing food. We need people perfecting ways of surviving in the wild – finding and purifying water, etc etc. We need people who can counsel rape and abuse survivors. We need people with safe, stable bases (physical and otherwise) who can and will shelter and support those who are going to engage in violent struggle. We need it all. So the zine was not at all supposed to come across as telling everyone that they need to get out there and blow something up (although we sure need a lot more people doing that). It was just supposed to motivate people to get used to and support those kind of actions, and engage in some kind of action themselves – whether it be growing vegetables, purifying water, counseling survivors, harboring 'terrorists', or, indeed, being a 'terrorist' of some sort themselves.

" Nita Crabb says, "we can discuss whether humans will change before, after or because of the crash. But I think most simply won't. But it only matters that the humans who survive change." Hang on...

1. Most humans who survive won't change.

2. To start properly over again, humans who survive must change.

I defeats 2 ! "

Actually, point 1 is misreading what Nita wrote. She wrote that "most simply won't", but she's not talking about those who survive there – she's talking about the entire humyn race ("before, after or because of the crash" – before the crash is now). Like I said towards the end of my 'Against Civilization' piece (the title of which I stole from a really excellent book): a large portion of the humyn race is about to die off. Yes, that is absolutely fucking horrific. No, there's no getting around it. In fact, you could even say that the longer we put it off the worse it will

eventually be. Nita is accepting that premise with what she's saying there. She's saying, as gently as possible, that she doesn't think that most of the humyn race is going to change, but that's ok because most of the humyn race has to die for this planet to survive anyway – 6 billion people on this planet is not anywhere near sustainable. "What matters is that those who survive change" – and don't try to rebuild what we had to destroy, or continue their cruel and unsustainable ways of exploitation and greed.

Apart from the fact that both are commodities with a price tag, I don't see the connection between my zine and Michael Moore dvd's. My zine was cut and pasted together by my own two hands, and is sold at a few cents more than it took me to copy each one up (and I give away as many as I can for free). His dvd's are mass-produced corporate products, that require hi-tech, destructive technology to even view them, and the making, production, promotion and selling of which would have contributed a few more million dollars to the U.S economy, and a few more million pounds worth of toxic waste and landfill to the earth. If he thinks that he can bring down corporations (or reform them) by making more money for them, good luck to him. I'm sure the size of his bank balance has nothing to do with it (sarcasm).

Sorry L-----, no diss. I do actually quite like the Michael Moore movies, and I do think that the more people wise up to what's going on the better, obviously. I just don't see any evidence that a whole bunch more people joining in on marches and rally's and signing petitions is actually going to make any fucking difference whatsoever. Did 20 million people marching against the war in Iraq change any of the government's minds about invading? So, considering that those governments are supposedly 'democratic', while corporations pretend no such thing, and also considering that a corporation exists purely to make money and they need to use cheap labor in order to maximize profits – and if they don't do all they can to maximize profits they can face legal action from their stockholders – how many million people marching/signing petitions/whatever Michael Moore's idea is would it take to convince a corporation to stop using sweatshops, for instance? My answer is: more than Michael Moore, Noam Chomsky, Ralph Nader, and every socialist group on earth combined will ever be able to gather together.

Even if some peaceful mass mobilization could force corporations to be a bit more fair and friendly, it wouldn't change anything. Industrial society – no matter how much the workers are getting paid – is still draining the planet of life ("resources") and using the energy to drown the entire natural world in plastic crap and junk mail and toxic chemicals and, soon enough, its own oceans. I read in several mainstream newspapers when I was last in the U.K that, even if the U.S (by far the world's no. 1 polluting nation) joined the rest of the industrial world (except Australia of course!) by signing the Kyoto accords (the poxy environmental agreement between most of the world's nations to cut carbon emissions by something pathetic like 5% in the next few million years or something), London would still be under water by 2050. Yes, you read that right. In 45 years.

Anyway, that was a monster email! I sure hope it sends ok!!!!

take care,

X X X

“...I don't ever want to lose sight of the real world again.”

Autumn 2005

Dear ----,

A--- and I have been reading your letters with an overriding sense of pleasure... we're so glad to be in contact and to share thoughts, ideas and experiences with you. It's pure soulfood and I hope only the beginning of many more letters between us.

...Thursday morning my son and I walked with our goats into (what we call) the back paddock on our land. A creek runs alongside this clearing and, on the other side of it, a Lyrebird was calling. It mimicked the calls of wattle birds, yellow tailed black cockatoos, the grey shrike thrush, and what I think may have been the beeping sound of a vehicle reversing – another bittersweet experience. We loved the beautiful rolling calls of our resident Lyrebird and I thought to myself, 'one day these birds will forget the sounds of chainsaws, of machinery rumbling, of the trees screaming as they're cut'. The logging coups are everywhere around us...displacing these creatures that can survive by outrunning the machine. Derrick [Jensen] is right, it is strangely like war.

The first article I read of yours was in G.A and it was a poignant piece for me. You talked about how your family history/indigenous roots were severed... We both know how it plays out in real life, you don't talk about it and it goes away. My story has some similarities. You see I was adopted. I was born in Melbourne on my birthmother's 18th birthday and taken from her without her seeing me let alone touching me. I was kept in the hospital until I was about 4 weeks old and my parents were assigned. My Mum and Dad had a 2 year old adopted son and I completed our family. I grew up always knowing I was adopted and I remember feeling so proud of the fact that my parents chose me. I loved my Mum and Dad of course and began a childhood that deteriorated into the school system... sitting in rows according to your so-called intelligence, fighting if I had to, trying to fit in and be invisible except to friends. The confusion and angst of my teens that went beyond 'what do you want to BE when you grow up?' ...I crawled inside a shell to survive. I needed to know something of myself and who I was before one path was severed and the other began. My Mum became sick when I was about 7 or so and progressively worsened as the years went on. I was helping her dress when I was very young and, as time went on, into a wheelchair, into the shower, to eat etc etc. It was a hard adolescence wrought from the terror of the next medical emergency... visiting her in hospital for months... dinner served from the slots of hospital food dispensers. She was an incredibly strong person though... the only one who could keep my brother in line. She died in 1984. My Dad and I went into hospital to see her as she slept. The nurse brought in a buttercup and put it near her and I remember it glowed such a vivid yellow compared to the grey of the room and my Mum's skin. I said goodbye to 'my darling Mum' and her eyes flicked open to stare at me with such an amazing sense of love that it took my breath away. She died that night and I was alone in the house when the phone call came. I had to tell my Dad when he came home. It wasn't the right time to pursue the old ghost of my past and the 'freedom of information' act was barely in to make my file accessible. I got a job, left home and rented, and stumbled through my grief.

My Dad was a gentle man and remained at my brothers beck and call until he died suddenly of heart failure in 1988. It was a huge shock for me... a tailspin of coping with that painful, all familiar rollercoaster ride of grief.

My brother and I had always had a terrible relationship and, once our Dad died, there was nothing left to hold us together.

A--- and I met and eventually became partners. Once our daughter was born, I felt the need to pursue my adoption file – to resurrect the ghost. It took a couple of months and my file was handed over. It contained my original birth certificate and name and the dry legal documents and signatures that dealt with whose daughter I was to become.

After writing a letter and our first phone calls, I met my birthmother and her husband in July 1994. I wasn't prepared for the emotions and feelings...the many questions that lead to others.

She told me that I have Tasmanian aboriginal heritage and something clicked into place. My grandfather 7 generations ago was Mannarlargenna. My family line, on my mothers and fathers side, descends from aboriginal women who were forcibly taken by the sealers because they had abilities to hunt (as well as being another resource which was there for the taking). I have traveled to Tasmania on numerous occasions. I met my birthfather and his family and the rest of my birthmother's family. For the first time in my life I saw people who had my features – it was mind-blowing stuff! I have two brothers and a sister on my birthmother's side and a brother and sister on my birthfather's. I also met my great grandmother (and for my daughter, her great, great grandmother), and my grandmother on my mothers side. On my father's side, I met my grandmother and between both there were many uncles and aunts that I began to know. It was so overwhelming... I can't begin to find the words.

It's 11 years this year since that time. I found some answers to my questions and I have a family again. We've been to Flinders Island, where my birthmother and birthfather grew up and saw the old family homes and the church and museum at Wybalenna, where aborigines were taken once they were 'rounded up'. We've been to sacred sites on the west coast of Tasmania which was a very special time.

How my heritage translates into real life is a real love of place... we have a strong relationship building with our land and the surrounds. We learn all the time. The weather comes from the mountains and I look to them – they teach me to be observant. My senses are gradually awakening. I trust the land and am beginning to tune in to movements and sounds. I love watching the diversity of birdlife living on the air currents, collecting insect life and never ceasing to amaze me (like the way a dusky robin can perch on our fence and then fly half way across the garden to land at an exact spot and pull up a worm... does it see minute changes in the soil and know an earthworm is beneath?) There's always something to learn and another step towards shedding the cultural conditioning that we all grew up with.

I read Leonard Peltier's book during the time a logging coup was being worked nearby... his words of wisdom and his story cut into me along with the sounds of chainsaws in the forest. I NEED to feel this pain – it helps to shed each layer of domestication. Chellis [Glendinning] and Derrick [Jensen] are both wonderful writers and have each helped me to understand many aspects of myself and the psychosis of civilized culture. And I'm thankful that A--- began to wake me up while we were still living in suburbia by asking me to read 'Ishmael'... my own torpor may have continued indefinitely if not for that first step. I love listening to Ward Churchill speak – the raw energy and truth of his words. I have read some of his essays... some I don't grasp so well, however I don't believe I'll ever hear a more eloquent and powerful understanding of 9/11... the ghosts of 500,000 Iraqi babies on the wings of those planes... or the understanding of how we are all colonized... we gotta kill the colonizer.

Lately I've been dipping into the zines you sent – thank you so much! There is so much excellent stuff within them... and I can see how people everywhere are trying to come to terms with gaining what's been lost by understanding and action. Reading this stuff is often challenging and it's so necessary to me... I don't ever want to lose sight of the real world again.

...Our love to you...

M-----

28th October, 2005

...[you] asked whether I call myself aboriginal or refer to myself as having aboriginal heritage. I prefer to say that I have aboriginal heritage because I feel it acknowledges my own history and experiences. An anthropologist went to the Bass Strait Islands in the 1930's to classify the aboriginal people there. They were photographed, measured (including head circumference), skin

colour coded and hair samples taken. My ancestors submitted to this and were placed in categories such as half-castes, quarter-castes, and hybrids (the women were referred to as 'stock'). This notion of 1/2, 1/4, 1/8 or 1/16 aboriginal is a civilised device which is often used as a way of control....by not officially acknowledging your right to identify as an indigenous person if you are too far removed on the family tree. (my grandmother used to put powder on her face to make her look white) After all, Truganini was referred to as the 'last of the Tasmanian aborigines'. (they managed to 'breed it out'!)

My aboriginality is a connection through the generations to pre-invasion Tasmania and through my growing understanding of history and my own life experience, I am reminded just how fragile the connection between generations before and the ones to follow can be. The severing effect is happening now. Where are our elders? (living in 'filing cabinets' for the aged) What skills and experience of living with the land and seas are passed down to the next generation? (technology has killed it) Where are our children? (taught by being outsourced into education facilities with a standardised curriculum, in before and after school care....they learn how to queue and soon forget how to play). It is a part of life before techno-crazy, sub-urban living...before 'mainstream economic life', pollution, chemicals, 9 to 5, 24/7, before roads, the car culture, clear cuts, open cuts, downsizing, the fast lane, ...etc. We need civilisation to crumble to get back what we've lost.

...Our love to you...

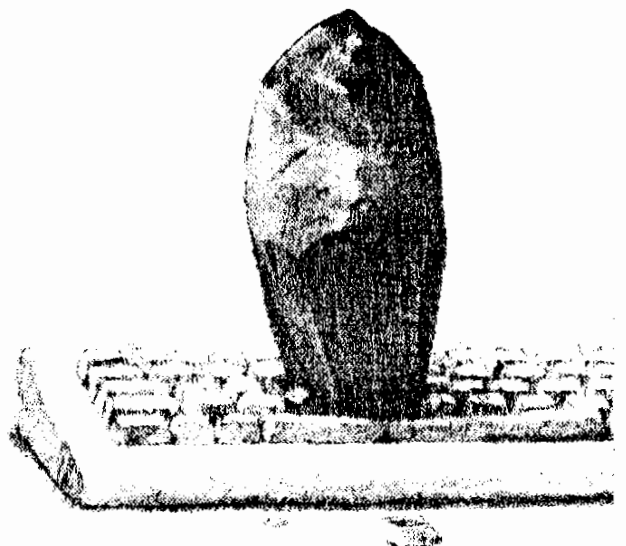
M-----

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Discussion and feedback are welcomed. Write to:

itsalreadyhere@wildmail.com

If you're not comfortable with correspondence being published just say so. Names and personal information will be edited (as will anything too long). As always, please keep death-threats, name-calling and shit-talking original if you want it to be considered for publication. Thanks!



“THEY’RE ALWAYS TELLING ME I’M TOO ANGRY”

CHRYSTOS

Specially when I mention land theft or rape or genocide
They go to therapy to understand themselves
pound anonymous pillows safely with a stranger
in the closed room of improper behavior
There is
no pillow I’m angry with
As far as I’m concerned I’m too tired to be angry enough
Angry that I can’t go anyplace
without seeing demeaning images & outright lies about Indian people
I’m livid that we can’t even keep the few pitiful acres we have left
if they happen to have uranium or copper or coal
Furious that I never feel safe alone on the streets
Angry that other People of Color
are sometimes as oppressive as whites
because whites taught them
everything they think they know about Indians
Riled that an Indian friend asked me why
I hang out with all those Black people
Angry with myself that I wasn’t fast enough to say
Why do you hang out with all those damn white folks
Steaming mad that a million people in this country
which is no longer in a recession
have no place to live
while office buildings sit empty for years
Enraged that you can buy a submachine gun in Florida
about any other kind of gun any place you want
while the army & the cops amass more than enough weapons to kill
every person on earth
Furious that my cousin got shot in the head
& lives now barely able to say his name
I’m mad as hell at alcohol, crack & child abuse
I could easily kill several million random white folks
just to feel a little balance on this poor earth

But I've known since I was little that no matter how many
of us they kill
it's only ok for us to help them kill other brown folks
or to cheat each other or hate each other
or to buy stuff & imitate whiteness
or to act like our own people are the real problems
& we're above it all
This is the pillow I'm hitting without any repercussions
Angry that women are in therapy
while men have increased tenfold raping and murdering
Furious with child porn
the use of children to sell toilet paper & laundry soap
Spitting with rage at intolerance starvation waste greed
all of which are reflected in myself despite my efforts
to seek balance
Boiling mad at my inadequacies & terror
raging that I'm still tortured by terrible nightmares
more than 20 years after I last saw the man
who raped my childhood into razors & nut houses
a man to whom nothing has happened or will happen
a man who did it to many other children
a man who my aunt handed me a picture of & said
This is when we were all such a happy family
though she knows what he did
a man whom even my closest friends tell me I shouldn't kill
They're wrong
Furious with the beaten parents who didn't protect me
because they didn't think I was worth it
or that they were
who beat me to shut me up
Enraged that the Black medical student was suspended
for punching out a white one who wore blackface to a party as a joke
Ha Ha it's so funny when you pretend to be one of us
Ha Ha we're not angry when you do any damn stupid thing you please
then punish us for our feelings in the matter
Ha Ha we love it when you buy your children fake tipis & headdresses
& books by whites of our stories with pictures of us
as pink charming savages
Ha Ha we're so happy you want to get rid of us so you can have all our stuff
& rename it & explain it & defame it
I'm enraged with every lying son of a turd

who takes our taxes to go to Bermuda & relax
after spending our money to murder whoever is
the current enemy & it's sometimes us
I'm spitting with rage that most of my friends can barely scramble by
I'm angry that I can't sleep that I hate myself
that I can't write as well as I want
because I'm so damn angry I can't breathe
Furious that nobody else seems to be angry
& they don't want me to be either
Enraged at this whole sodden rotting mess they keep calling
civilization
as it poisons the air & the water & kills everyone in its way
which is so barbaric as to lock up its Elders
for the crime of not being able to care for themselves
which thinks of age as disease instead of wisdom
which persists in calling queers sick or depraved or immoral
despite the so-called separation of church & state
which doesn't exist
Red hot that I have to defend my anger
that sometimes I'm the nice one in comparison
to an even angrier woman
& then I'm treated with more respect
which demeans us both
I'm sick to death of blank eyes/zombies/nice girls
& lesbians who take drugs so they won't be depressed
as though depression is bad when it is a very rational
response to our lives
& I have spent my life living inside numbing depression
without drugs, gritting my teeth through another hour & resisting suicide
with my bare hands because I can't bear to let them win
when so many of my loved ones have blown their brains out in despair
I'm disgusted with drunks
& everybody who thinks
they're alive only to please themselves
even though some of them are my friends
I'd like to kill reality
which I don't understand
I want to blow up every stupid university
pretending that it is teaching something new
when all that's happening is that students are officially treated like fools
until they care only about a piece of paper

& whether I have a piece of paper or not
All the pieces of paper all the degrees are burning up in my anger
Everyone will have to face each other as human
I'm sick of everyone who asks
What do you do?
As though some corporate title or college bs
is an identity
I want to tie up all the white supremacists into crosses
set fire to their hatred
I want to fight back with every tendon of my weary body
run by a mind who remembers the toilet taste of jail food
knows the brutality of nut houses
arms that remember straitjackets & forced drugs & the screams
of women being dragged off to shock torture
knowing that to speak up too loudly means to be killed
because decent people
beat pillows or their wives instead of racism or hunger
because the idea of being nice is more important
than the idea of being real
It's the cotton candy we've all been eating
until I, at least, am sick to death
I'm furious with English-only laws
with Japanese-bashing celebrated
as some kind of special holy cleancut sport
Furious that anti-Semitism is as respectable as ever
& everybody who wants to talk about it must be a *pushy Jew*
I could kill those thousands of people who claim the nazi Holocaust
didn't happen
I'm angry that as these words rattle out of my mouth
I'm already cutting them back cooling them off
taking the sting out because I'm afraid of what I might do
if I hear one more damn time
WHY are you so angry?
Raging that common sense & kindness are passé
not quite with it
Angry that breast cancer kills twice as many women
as men who have died of AIDS/SIDA but we're all
still paying attention to the poor men
as usual
I'm blowing my top about clear cuts, abuse of resources
abuse of workers, torture of animals for testing cosmetics

with the terrifying idea that wearing fur makes a woman sexy or special
with the largest slave labor force in the world which is called
the u.s. bureau of prisons
Sick of everyone watching light-filled shadows on a screen
more important than life
that your average citizen spends more time
adoring those shadows than speaking to their own children
I'm furious with my incoherence
my inability to affect almost everything in my life
I'm angry with everyone who's said some appallingly stupid thing
about peace pipes or pow wows or totem poles or tipis
Furious that the accepted ways to solve our pain
are to pay somebody to listen to us
or to adopt some party line without deviation
& preach it to everyone else
or to get high or to buy yet another piece of crap we don't really need
or to disappear into games
Angry with organized & disorganized religions which fill people's lives
with ignorant laws or hocus pocus or convince them that pain is holy
although I reserve most of my venom for the catholic church
which ruined my life with lies I'm still unraveling
I'm angry that none of us lives to our potential
that we've frightened into being the least we can be
to survive
Outraged that so much is swept under rugs
that we can barely walk
Furious that almost everyone still uses the world *blind*
to mean ignorant or insensitive or clumsy
that millions of trees are slaughtered to print romance novels or spy chillers
& every kind of wall street garbage
until I'm ashamed
to put words to paper at all
Most of us can hardly function
poisoned by corporate nonsense
assaulted with unnecessary chemicals
making somebody who hates us a nice fat profit
Angry that my back hurts all the time
from cleaning the houses of the lazy wealthy for 20 years
not one of whom is as intelligent, creative, or powerful as I am
Angry that I'm going to die this angry
& probably not be able to change a damn thing

Enraged that every place I go is inaccessible
even when they've altered the bathrooms inside because it's the law
when a chair still can't get up the outside stairs or in the door
At the braille signs inside elevators where there are none outside it
Furious with ignorance & apathy those smug cousins in every family
I can't shut my heart to the pain thudding all around us
Here in my hands are all the faces of those I've seen begging
in doorways, on freeway ramps, on sidewalks
begging for change for a meal or a drink
whose desperation is now against the law
This is just the scratched raw surface of my anger
which is fueled by the righteousness
of knowing we don't have to live this way
We could embrace our profound connections
and our deep differences
learn from each other
Honor each other
begin to live without torturing
If you aren't as angry as I am we probably shouldn't try
to talk to each other
because I'm furious with your fear of anger
I'm angry that others are always telling me
that they feel the same way I do but they're afraid to say so
or they don't know how
or they'd lose their job or their lover
If you can speak
you can be angry
if you can't speak bang your fork
If you're furious with me
because I haven't mentioned something
you're angry about
get busy & write it yourself
There is no such beast as too angry
I'm a canary down this mine of apathy
singing & singing my yellow throat on fire
with this sacred holy purifying
spirit of anger

For Ayofemi Faloyan

Bibliography / Recommended Reading

Because a White Man'll Never Do It – Kevin Gilbert
Acts of Rebellion: The Ward Churchill Reader – Ward Churchill
Against Civilization – John Zerzan (Ed.)
Blood on the Wattle: Massacres and Maltreatment of Aboriginal Australians since 1788
(third edition) – Bruce Elder
Green Anarchy magazine #'s 18, 19, 20 – various
Endgame: The Collapse of Civilization and the Rebirth of Community – Derrick Jensen
A Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations –
Clive Ponting
The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide – Robert Jay Lifton
Catalyst: The Birth and Death of Civilization (draft) – Kevin Tucker
Species Traitor Journal #4 – various
'My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization' – Chellis Glendinning
The Book of Pleasures – Raoul Vaneigem
The Party's Over: Oil, War, and the Fate of Industrial Societies – Richard Heinberg
Anatomy of Human Destructiveness – Erich Fromm
The War of the Flea: Guerilla Warfare Theory and Practice – Robert Taber
Feral Revolution – Feral Faun
On the Road Again: Direct Action Underground – Anon.
At Daggers Drawn: with the existent, it's defenders, and its false critics – Anon.
Armed Joy – Alfredo Bonanno
Ruminations From a Dead Tongue zine – N.
Rolling Thunder #1 – CrimethInc
Fire and Ice: Disturbing the Comfortable and Comforting the Disturbed While Tracking
Our Wildest Dreams – Laurel Luddite & Skunkly Monkly
In the Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of Indian
Nations – Jerry Mander

(Some of which are available within Australasia from the anarcho-bookworms at
Beating Hearts Press: www.beatingheartspress.com)

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Back Cover. Text: Jeremy Bentham, Pic: Palm Island (from
<http://itwillbethundering.resist.ca>)

Dedication. For L, who makes this world worth fighting for.

**PROPERTY AND
LAW ARE BORN
TOGETHER**



**AND DIE
TOGETHER**